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MEDITATIONS

AND

PRAYERS.

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MEDITATIONS

AND

PRAYERS

ON THE

ORDINATION SERVICE

FOR DEACONS.

BY THE

REV. JOHN H. PINDER, M.A.

PRINCIPAL OF THE WELLS THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE,

AND CANON OF WELLS CATHEDRAL.

LONDON:

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1853.

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TO

MY YOUNGER BRETHREN,

WHO HAVE FORMERLY GIRDED THEMSELVES FOR THE

WORK OF THE MINISTRY,

At the Wells Theological College,

AS WELL AS TO THOSE WHO ARE NOW MEMBERS

OF THAT INSTITUTION,

THIS MANUAL IS INSCRIBED,

WITH PRAYER TO GOD FOR HIS BLESSING THEREON,

IN CHRIST,

BY THEIR AFFECTIONATE FRIEND,

J. H. P.

PREFACE.

THIS Manual was undertaken with the hope of supplying, in some degree, a want frequently felt by those who are preparing for Holy Orders.

The earnest desire of the Author is, that it may be helpful in leading the mind to *keep the Ordination Vow continually* in view.

Should the writer's life be spared, it is his intention, God permitting, to prepare a somewhat larger Manual on the Office for Priests.

And while the present work aims at being chiefly prospective, the forthcoming volume will be marked by Prayers and Meditations of a more retrospective character.

THE FORM AND MANNER

OF

MAKING OF DEACONS,

ACCORDING TO THE ORDER OF

The United Church of England and Ireland.

THE PREFACE.

It is evident unto all men diligently reading the holy Scripture and ancient Authors, that from the Apostles' time there have been these Orders of Ministers in Christ's Church; Bishops, Priests, and Deacons. Which Offices were evermore had in such reverend Estimation, that no man might presume to execute any of them, except he were first called, tried, examined, and known to have such qualities as are requisite for the same; and also by publick Prayer, with Imposition of Hands, were approved and admitted thereto by lawful Authority. And therefore to the intent that these Orders may be continued, and reverently used and esteemed, in the United Church of England and Ireland; no man shall be accounted or taken to be a lawful Bishop,

Priest, or Deacon in the United Church of England and Ireland, or suffered to execute any of the said Functions, except he be called, tried, examined, and admitted thereunto, according to the Form hereafter following, or hath had formerly Episcopal Consecration, or Ordination.

And none shall be admitted a Deacon, except he be Twenty-three years of age, unless he have a Faculty. And every man which is to be admitted a Priest shall be full Four-and-twenty years old. And every man which is to be ordained or consecrated Bishop shall be fully Thirty years of age.

And the Bishop, knowing either by himself, or by sufficient testimony, any Person to be a man of virtuous conversation, and without crime; and, after examination and trial, finding him learned in the Latin Tongue, and sufficiently instructed in holy Scripture, may at the times appointed in the Canon, or else, on urgent occasion, upon some other Sunday or Holy-day, in the face of the Church, admit him a Deacon, in such manner and form as hereafter followeth.

RUBRIC.

WHEN the day appointed by the Bishop is come, after Morning Prayer is ended, there shall be a Sermon or Exhortation, declaring the duty and Office of such as come to be admitted Deacons; how necessary that order is in the Church of Christ; and also how the people ought to esteem them in their Office.

MEDITATION I.

"THE day appointed" is well-nigh come. It is coming for *me* at last. How anxiously do many look for that day! Some, even from childhood, like holy Samuel, have been dedicated to the Lord as His ministering servants by pious parents. And the lowly prayer of Faith has been answered, in cases not a few, of devout men, by an implanted desire in their hearts to be "put into the Ministry." Some, again, have been "caught up, like "David, of the Lord, to be shepherds and

"keepers of his people[1]." Some again have greatly longed to stand before the Lord, but have been restrained by fears of unworthiness from crying to Him, "here am "I, send me[2]." "Who is sufficient for "these things[3]?" They who are least defiled by sin, must yet tremble at the thought of going forth as ambassadors for Christ. They who have passed through a variable course of life, sometimes acting for God, too often for self and for the world, can they do otherwise than fear, lest there need yet more dross to be purged away, before they can be used as fitting vessels for the sanctuary? "If a "man therefore purge himself from these, "he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanc-"tified, and meet for the Master's use, "and prepared unto every good work[4]." One, it is feared, may have been absolutely profligate. But God has touched his heart; and he has fervently renewed his Baptismal

[1] Vid. Preface to Bishop Ken's Practice of Divine Love.

[2] Vid. Exod. iv. 1—13. [3] 2 Cor. ii. 16.

[4] 2 Tim. ii. 21.

vow; and he now desires to declare *that* mercy and long-suffering to others, of which he has richly partaken himself. Another has been idle and inconstant; he has been fearful of speaking out for God, when, either at school, or in College rooms, the indecent or profane jest was heard. But he has received grace from the Spirit to dare for the Lord; and having renewed and confirmed his vow to be Christ's "faithful soldier and servant," he trusts in the strength of his God, that he can now be bold in the Lord's service. While my mind runs over the past, as to others, may I not be slow to look within! What have been *my* sins? How many! How have I offended against blessed opportunities of renewing grace! Is not the charge made good against my soul of time wasted; unhallowed desires admitted; appetites indulged; doubtings of revealed truth; the holy Eucharist forsaken; the Lord's Day desecrated; the festival and fast of the Church neglected; of vain glory; fear of man; ungoverned tempers; unstable resolutions! Who am I, that I can hope, not only to

be forgiven, but to be sent forth by the Holy Ghost to prepare the way of the Lord! to enforce upon others those duties which I have myself neglected! as a young man, to teach my aged superiors; and to administer to them those Sacraments and ordinances which my heart tells me that I have overlooked, or at times undervalued! At least, let me at once, before taking the irrevocable vow, and receiving the indelible Orders, assure myself, that my sins have been long since humbly mourned at the foot of the Cross; and specially during a prescribed season of retirement, self-denial, and sacred study; that my faith is fixed on the Lord Jesus, as the only and all-sufficient Saviour; and that a resolution, in the strength of God, has been formed within me to live wholly for God, and to become an instrument, if it be His will, of saving the souls of others, while seeking conformity to the mind of Christ myself.

It brings no small relief to my mind, in considering the distance between the Dea-

con's and the Priest's Orders, to reflect on the opportunity which will be afforded me, of more fully preparing myself for the infinitely higher responsibility. All earthly callings and professions have their preparatory grades. How, then, shall the ambassador of grace be otherwise than trained by slow and solemn steps, and strict self-discipline, for this mighty Office!

And now, O my soul, let me inquire what will be expected at my hands. Well does the Church term the Deacon's office "necessary:" for it has the stamp of God for its authority, and the voice of the Church, from earliest days, for testimony to its existence and exercise. And I pray God that I may not be led into one of those perilous positions in which, there being no resident rector, I, a Deacon, a mere youth, should incur the responsibilities, to a certain degree, of the Priesthood.

RUBRIC.

First the Archdeacon, or his Deputy, shall present

unto the Bishop (sitting in his chair near to the Holy Table) such as desire to be ordained Deacons (each of them being decently habited) saying these words:

The Church requires that I be "decently habited." May the white robe, then, to be worn, bring before my mind the spotless purity needful in those who minister before the Lord!

If we would but realize the actual Presence in the sanctuary, at all times, but specially in such an hour, of our God and Saviour, how solemn a frame of reverential awe would rise up within us! The spirits before the throne veil their faces in the intenseness of their adoration. "Woe is "me (cried Isaiah), for mine eyes have "seen the King, the Lord of Hosts[5]." St. John fell, as one dead, at the feet of Him, on whose bosom, upon earth, he had dutifully and devoutly leaned[6]. Oh! that my short comings had not reduced me so far beneath the elevated, may I not say, the

[5] Isa. vi. 5. [6] Rev. i. 17.

unearthly standard by which the Ministerial character should be framed! We want faith in this great truth, that the Divine Presence is specially manifested where two or three are gathered together in the name of Christ. "We wait for thy loving-"kindness, O God, in the midst of thy "temple [7]."

If men of other callings are taught to acknowledge "how necessary the office of "the Deacon is," how deeply ought I to ponder what manner of man I ought to be, so as to answer, in any measure, the demands of that sacred calling! Especially when reflecting that the Church reminds us of the Ministers of the Lord being rightly esteemed in their office. We must be ready to magnify our office, while humbling ourselves; we must be jealous over ourselves, and not suffer the desire of approval, much less of praise, to interfere with the entire consecration of our hearts before God. Self must be for-

[7] Ps. xlviii. 8.

gotten in our office. Yet we may return thanks to the Giver of all mercy, when, like Timothy, there is a good report of any among the brethren. While I would not seek to please men, I would acknowledge, as the gift of God, that kindliness of manner towards the pastor, which, regarding him as on God's errand, cheers his steps along the rugged paths of the Ministerial course. "Not unto us, O "Lord; not unto us, but unto thy Name "be the Praise given [8]."

"Ye have not chosen ME, but I have "chosen you [9]." Blessed be our gracious Saviour for this promise, belonging to *us*, in our low degree, no less than to the Apostles, in their high Order. What comfort, what confidence does the very thought inspire, that I am chosen, in my lot, by the Divine Head of the Church! If the blessed angel Gabriel must have rejoiced, when sent to announce the Incar-

[8] Ps. cxv. 1. [9] John xv. 16.

nation of the Lord, shall I not leap for joy, who am soon to be, (I trust,) anointed for declaring the mighty Ransom accomplished, and the Atonement accepted; for proclaiming peace and pardon to the penitent, and the acceptable year of the Lord. Yet, O Lord, who am I, that Thou shouldest send me forth, or permit me to be called into the courts and holy offices of thy sanctuary! "Unto me, who am "less than the least of all saints, is this "grace given, that I should preach . . . "the unsearchable riches of Christ [1]."

PRAYER.

O ALMIGHTY GOD and Father, who hast constituted the various orders of Angels and Archangels in a wonderful manner, as ministers of thy grace, and didst appoint Levites to be helpers to the Priests, under the Law, give grace unto thy servant to look unto Thee for all needful strength and guidance, in this dread hour of receiving such a commission at thy hands.

[1] Eph. iii. 8.

O teach me what a solemn work it is, to be employed in bringing back souls unto the Lord. Inspire me with a spirit of prayer. Make me full of the Holy Ghost, and of wisdom for this necessary work. Humble me, more and more, under a sense of my great unworthiness of so great an honour. And when the great day is come that I must give in my account, may the mercy of God be extended unto me, for the sake of our great and compassionate High Priest, Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

"GRANT, O Lord, that in all our suf-
"ferings here upon earth, for the testimony
"of thy truth, we may stedfastly look up
"to heaven, and by faith behold the glory
"that shall be revealed; and being filled
"with the Holy Ghost, may learn to love
"and to bless our persecutors, by the ex-
"ample of thy first martyr, St. Stephen,
"who prayed for his murderers to Thee,
"O blessed Jesus, who standest at the
"right hand of God, to succour all those
"that suffer for Thee, our only Mediator
"and Advocate."

MEDITATION II.

"REVEREND Father in God, I present "unto you these persons present to be "ordained Deacons." The Bishop: "Take "heed, that the persons whom ye present "unto us, be apt and meet for their learn- "ing and Godly conversation, to exercise "their ministry duly to the honour of "God, and to the edifying of his Church." The Archdeacon shall answer, "I have "inquired of them, and also examined "them, and think them so to be."

"TAKE HEED!" Can we, in after years, ever forget the sound of those words applied to ourselves, from the lips of our spiritual Father, acting by the authority, and in the special presence of Him, who has promised to be with His Church "alway, even to the end of the world," and surely present mysteriously in the celebration of this Holy Office?

I trust, indeed, that I have in spirit and in truth presented myself to God in Christ Jesus, long before this hour. In my Baptism was I not washed and dedicated to the service of my Lord, who redeemed me? Was I not grafted into Christ? But, O what vows are upon me from that hour! In my Confirmation was I not self-devoted, and my self-surrender registered then before God? In my first and after Communions, have I not professed to give myself to Him, who gave Himself for me? But what fruits have followed from those repeated days of grace? Is there reality in all this? Has all this been done by me heartily? Renouncing the world in its light, and riotous pleasures, and its alluring distinctions, abhorring the touch of sensuality under every form, and in a strength from above, bidding defiance to the threats and snares of the evil one? Have I presented myself in body and soul as a reasonable sacrifice, as a willing and enduring soldier of the great Captain of our salvation? Does my heart respond to those words of David, "Thy servant will

"go and fight with this Philistine[2]." And is this spirit of confidence derived from the support of Him, who hath delivered, and can deliver,—not from a vain estimate of my own power or skill? It is a great gift to be sanguine. But, like other gifts, this must be guarded well; else in some hour of trial we may be tempted to look away from God, and trust to human devices. Surely, I may read a lesson of lowliness and watchfulness, on remembering that the Ministers of the first covenant were not admissible to their office, until thirty years of age had been attained; and let me consider into how great difficulties and snares I must be thrown immediately after Ordination. How fearful should I be, lest a word that may be misapplied or misunderstood, fall from my lips in preaching Christ's Gospel! How careful in recollecting the judgment on Nadab and Abihu, lest I commit some grievous error in the services of the Sanctuary! How watchful in visiting from house to house, lest I

[2] 1 Sam. xvii. 32.

should drop a word of encouragement, where rebuke is wanted; or alarm a soul which needs tenderness in binding up its wounds!

But there is enough to make me thoughtful in the past, as well as in having regard to the future. "Take heed "that the persons whom ye present, be "apt and meet for their learning." It cannot be expected that in the short interval between leaving the University, and this present hour, I can have attained to any great compass of sacred learning, or that I can have even digested all that I have read. But, at least, I am bound not to offer myself in so solemn a transaction between the Lord and my soul without having laid a solid foundation. The Church needs not the services of those who have been idle, or immethodical, or profligate, and have not recovered themselves. Have I prayed for grace to be "apt and meet," while studying the originals of God's Word, the Apostolic Fathers, the early

Councils, the Evidences of Divine Revelation, the systematic volumes of Pearson, Butler, Hooker, &c., the Constitution, and Teaching, and Ritual of our own Church, and learning practically the sacred duties of a Parish Priest in all their fulness? This is not the work of a day; this should be the business of a consecrated life.

"One thing have I desired of the Lord, "that will I seek after; that I may dwell "in the house of the Lord all the days of "my life, to behold the beauty of the "Lord, and to inquire in his temple[3]." If an inspired Apostle required that his "books" and his "parchments[4]" should be forwarded to him, which of us can dispense with study, as the appointed means of knowing the will of God, so as to appropriate it to each in his Church in due season?

But it is not enough for us to labour over our books as mere scholars. We must

[3] Ps. xxvii. 4.

[4] 2 Tim. iv. 13.

reflect much, and meditate much, and pray over them continually[5]. My Lord bids me to ponder the state of my heart, while He saith unto me, "Simon, son of Jonas, "lovest thou me?" Woe unto me, that I have omitted oftentimes to begin my studies with prayer, and have closed them, with like forgetfulness of God! Or I have prayed in a hurried and formal spirit, without realizing the great verity, that His grace alone can "prosper the work of my "hands." And yet, in a better mood, all praise to His grace, how sweet have been His words unto my mouth, yea, sweeter than honey unto my throat!

Diligence as a Student, and zeal as a Pastor, and faith as a Christian, must go together, to make a man of God. *He* will, no doubt, visit most efficiently in the

[5] Bp. Andrewes' Devotions, Bp. Wilson's Sacra Privata (Ed. 1853), Bp. Taylor's Advice to his Clergy, Brewster on the Ordination Services, are suggested, as well as the more ancient works of S. Chrysostom on the Priesthood, and S. Greg. M. on the Pastoral Office, as devotional helps in the Ministry.

parish, who comes forth from his oratory, and his study before God, stored with knowledge and holy meditation. And *he* will be the most successful student, who practically enters into the wants and feelings of his people, and seeks to supply their necessities from the accumulated treasures of departed saints, and able divines. Shall I not more easily combat error, when, by the light of Ecclesiastical History, I am reminded, when this and that particular *form* of error appeared before, and how it was refuted?

But if aptness and meetness in learning will be required of me, still more awful is the demand of proofs that I am not wanting in Godly conversation, (πολίτευμα,) the life of a Christian citizen: "Our conversa-"tion is in heaven[6]." Can I persuade myself that my chief concernment is with God in heaven, through His dear Son? Are my interests, hopes, desires, and affections mainly fixed on things above, instead of the things of this world? Have I not

[6] Phil. iii. 20.

been redeemed by Him, who is in heaven at the right hand of God? Am I not being renewed by the Comforter, unless grace be received in vain? Is not heaven the Christian's home? And should not my heart be in heaven, and my whole life correspond with this blessed destination? If the life of every Christian should be an example, what must be the aim of those who are to be "examples of the examples "themselves?" The minister of Christ must spend more time in prayer. Others may relieve the poor; he must "take "care" of them. Others must show themselves their brethren; he must be their father. They must pray frequently and fervently; but he must give himself up to the Word of God, and to prayer. Others must watch and pray, lest they fall into temptation; he must watch for himself and others too. The people must mourn when they sin; but he must mourn for his own infirmities, and for the sins of others[7]. "What do ye more than

[7] Vid. Bp. J. Taylor's Sermon on the Christian Minister's Duty in Life and Doctrine.

"others[8]?"—we must, as it were, hear the invisible Head of the Church ever demanding this of us.

Not only must we present ourselves, from high and pure motives for admittance at first into the sacred ministry of God's Church, but we must be ever striving to "be "perfect, even as our Father in heaven is "perfect[9]." Is there a reference to God in all that is undertaken by me? For the demand is "*Godly* conversation." Is it my leading desire to approve myself to God? Am I never ensnared by praise, title, or notice, coming from man, as a counter motive? It is all-important, indeed, for the well-being of society, that men be just and sincere; it is well to be amiable and friendly. But am I seeking to be GODLY? Is it, at least, my most solemn determination to stir up the gifts of grace within me, and set my heart on the Lord, as my Light and my Salvation,

[8] Matt. v. 47. [9] Matt. v. 48.

my Rock, my Refuge, my Stay, and my Strength?

My estimate of myself will probably be partial. Readily must I submit to be "examined," and have my past life and present state "inquired" into, and that not too easily. We must not think it hard, if we learn that the search of the Bishop, fearful of laying on hands suddenly, and partaking of other men's sins, has made scrutiny even into our school-boy days, as well as our home and Collegiate course. God grant that I myself may have gone yet further, and traced the very first germs of sin in my own infancy and childhood, and earliest hours of life. "O Lord! re-"member not the sins and offences of my "youth; but, according to thy mercy, think "Thou upon me, O Lord, for thy good-"ness[10]." Have I feared Thee as I ought in my youth, or loved Thee as I ought in my advancing years, or preserved a conscience void of offence towards God and

[10] Ps. xxv. 6.

man? O Lord, I confess that I have not. "God! be merciful to me, a sinner." "If "Thou, Lord, shouldst be extreme to mark "what we have done amiss, O Lord, who "could abide it?" But for His sake, who purchased a pardon for all penitent sinners, forgive my unrighteousness, and impute not unto me my former transgressions, but grant me a good hope of acceptance, now and ever, in the blood of Jesus Christ, thy Son.

PRAYER.

ALMIGHTY GOD, the Fountain of all wisdom, enlighten my mind, that I may be able to see, and show unto others the wonders of thy Divine Truth. Give me a spirit of diligence in studying and in meditating on thy Holy Word, and in gathering from the writings of thy faithful servants, such wisdom and knowledge, as shall render me a scribe instructed unto the kingdom of heaven. Above all, enable me to set my affection on things above, and to have my daily conversation in

heaven, while labouring in my appointed vocation upon earth. Magnify thy mercy in dealing with my soul, that I may give myself *wholly* to thy service, and exercise my ministry to thy glory, and in edifying of thy Church; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

PRAYER.

O MERCIFUL LORD, who hatest nothing that Thou hast made, and dost forgive the sins of all them that are penitent, create and make in me a new and contrite heart, that I, worthily lamenting my sins, and acknowledging my wretchedness, may obtain of Thee, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness, for the merits of Jesus Christ, our only Mediator and Advocate.

MEDITATION III.

"THEN the Bishop shall say unto the peo-
"ple: 'Brethren, if there be any of you

"'who knoweth any Impediment, or notable
"'Crime, in any of these persons presented
"'to be ordered Deacons, for the which he
"'ought not to be admitted to that Office,
"'let him come forth in the Name of God,
"'and show what the Crime or Impediment
"'is.' And if any great Crime or Impedi-
"ment be objected, the Bishop shall sur-
"cease from Ordering that person, until
"such time as the party accused shall be
"found clear of that Crime."

I must first undergo examination, and submit to a full inquiry into my past course, before I can be openly presented to the Bishop for Ordination. But the Church is jealous with a godly jealousy for her sons. The cause is the cause of God. The interest is the interest of the whole Church. The people receive good or ill, according as a minister of Christ is faithful, or false, or unqualified. And upon this account let me take it to heart, how kindly the Church has been making prayer for me during Ember Week,—that

I may have the heavenly benediction; that I may be replenished with truth of doctrine, and endued with innocency of life. A most solemn appeal is made to all present, by the Bishop, in the Name of the Most High God, adjuring them to come forward and bear witness against any one whom impediment, or crime, forbids to approach nearer to God. What an appeal! Can I think of it without trembling? A witness there is, indeed, who can at once testify against me, and send me back covered with shame—my own conscience. Could others also be summoned in this approaching hour, who have been privy to my deeds of darkness and folly, presumptuousness and backsliding, how could I ever hope for admission to the high privilege? It would overwhelm me to hear a voice from the congregation suddenly proclaiming, "I forbid the ad-"mission: I protest against his ordina-"tion!" Such protests may occur in our times. And yet, what is the shame which I should then feel compared with the self-abasement which I ought to feel; when I

remember that nothing is hidden from God, and yet that I am putting myself forward into the service of that Holy God: *that* God, who is aware of every sinful thought, passion, word, and doing, from my youth up even until now. Oh! how great is the plague of the heart! To how many must be bitter the remembrance of youthful lusts, idle words, the cherished sin, the uncleansed impurity, drunkenness, revellings of early life, chambering and wantonness in unguarded youth! The Lord give me grace to see how far in these things *I* have been guilty, and grant me pardon and peace, for Jesus' sake.

If there be a soul that needs deep, deep conviction of sin, that has cause to cry to God for humiliation, self-loathing, and contrite sorrow, it is the man who is seeking "the ministry of reconciliation." He must, if he would be safe, or serviceable to his Lord, labour to engrave on the heart a clear, well-arranged memorial of his sins. In all their polluting, degrading, condemn-

ing character, he must become conscious of them. The rebelliousness, the peril of his soul he must realize, or he will never duly appreciate the "Lamb of God that "taketh away the sins of the world." How shall such an one dare to reconcile others, who has not himself ever fled for refuge in spirit to the only Saviour, Jesus? How shall *he* preach Christ's Gospel, and soothe the awakened sinner's fears, who has had no fears for himself, and has never heartily renewed his covenant of Baptism? How shall *he* minister the Body and Blood of Christ in all its spiritual richness, who cannot recall the sincere sense of hunger and thirst for the strengthening Bread of Life and the reviving Cup of Salvation? Repentance, out of which grows up implanted faith, must have a real beginning. Jesus is no Redeemer to those whose hearts are not broken for sin, as committed against His mercy and the love of the Father. I fear that even now, though I have searched the chambers of my soul, and mourned, and wept, and implored mercy at the foot of the Cross, I fear that

even now my repentance is not deep, nor my sorrow as piercing as it should be. And therefore my faith is but weak, and my hope does not cheer me within. But I resolve, not in my own strength, but in His, who hath washed and signed me for His own, and would have me to be saved. I resolve in the strength of the Lord God to strive daily to deepen my repentance, to seek a higher grace for stablishing my faith, and to live unto God henceforth, so that I can say, "Thou art my portion, O "Lord."

But granting that I can look forward with hope to no public accusation being brought forward, and that my burden is laid where Divine mercy warrants my casting it, still there are other considerations before me. While there is not open crime, there may be secret "impediment." Personal infirmity of some kind may be oppressing me. Take heed, O my soul! let not my services be offered unto God on *this* account, because the world will not

accept them. At least, let me be open and honest, and use no palliation in this matter. Am I conscious of any disqualifying eccentricity of mind or manner? Is there any thing in connexion with my circumstances, position, relatives, intimate friends, which may operate as a serious drawback to a Pastor's ministrations before God, and to his acceptableness in the Ministerial work? If there be, delay will be a blessing. Perhaps, it may never have appeared before me, till now, in so strong a light. The impression may have come down from the good Spirit of God to make me pause. "Thus saith the Lord, "Consider your ways[1]." "Before I was "afflicted I went astray; but now have I "kept thy word[2]."

O most gracious Father, who wouldest not the death of a sinner, but rather that he should be converted and live, have mercy upon me, who earnestly desire to

[1] Haggai i. 5. [2] Ps. cxix. 67.

obtain thy mercy, and to convey the riches of thy grace to the souls of others. I know, O Lord, that thou searchest the very hearts and reins. My faults, which are without number, and like unto scarlet, are all known unto Thee. O Lord, as far as I may be able to bear it, show my inmost self unto me, that I may come to Thee for thy promised mercy and healing. Do away my crimes, O Lord! Blot them from the dreadful Book of Remembrance! Let them not be mentioned against me at the great day to my destruction! And if there be in my body, or mind, or estate, any impediment which can hinder me in my great and glorious work, make me aware of it before it be too late, and before I go forth to obstruct the purpose of the Lord. But if, after a careful search with the "candle of the Lord," I see my way hopefully, accept me, such as I am, in Christ thy Son, and make me in Him what Thou wouldest have me to be, that I may henceforth run the way of thy commandments and glorify thy Name, through the same, Jesus Christ our Lord.

It is a high duty to maintain a growing spirit of repentance; and if I be allowed to enter the Ministry, I purpose, with God's gracious help, to set apart not only private days for fasting, and prayer, and self-examination, but devoutly to follow the leading of the Church herein. The Ember Weeks thus observed, four times a year bringing me on my knees before God, will, I trust, continually be the means of quickening my knowledge of myself, and drawing me nearer to God. His great forbearance and mercy towards me will be more felt in considering my sins and imperfections; and I trust, at each sacred season, to have a more confirmed hope of salvation, while I am rendered more lowly, and patient, and zealous for the Lord. And as this sacred observance will specially bring me under God's grace for Ministerial correction and advancement, so will I strive to profit by all the more solemn periods, in order to my ripening for heaven. In Advent, and during the Rogation Days, the Lent Fast, the Holy Week, on each Friday in the

year, on the Vigils and Eves, as a dutiful and thankful son of our Church, will I religiously observe her rules; and, "looking "unto Jesus, the author and finisher of "my faith," will labour to go on from strength to strength, though sometimes faint, yet struggling with the enemies of my soul.

RUBRIC.

Then the Bishop (commending such as shall be found meet to be Ordered to the Prayers of the congregation) shall, with the Clergy and people present, sing or say the Litany, with the Prayers as followeth.

The Litany and Suffrages.

When our Divine Master was about to leave the world, He committed His disciples (as we read, St. John xvii.) to the heavenly care of the Father, in words of most gracious and powerful intercession. And, following this pattern of the great Shepherd of Souls, the Bishop, in a special clause of the Litany (having first "com-"mended such as shall be found meet to

"be Ordered, to the Prayers of the congre-
"gation,") thus, in the name of the whole congregation, intercedes for the candidates: "That it may please thee to bless "these thy servants, now to be admitted "to the Order of Deacons, and to pour "thy grace upon them; that they may "duly execute their Office, to the edifying "of thy Church, and the glory of thy holy "Name." The ordinary intercession in the Litany for the Illumination of Christ's Pastors is, indeed, most valuable. How difficult, for such a weak and ignorant creature as myself, to see the objects of Divine truth with any degree of clear apprehension! to realize the sublime mysteries of the Godhead; and God Incarnate; and the union of Christ with His members through the Spirit; and the Sacraments as channels of life divine, and love, and mercy from the Fountain above to the fainting heart of man! Continually shall I need to pray that, thus enlightened and guided, I may *live the truth*, as well as preach the truth. Much indeed is con-

tained in the words of the prayer, that we "may duly execute our Office." The dedication must be sincere; the motive high and stringent; the purpose steady and energetic. What need have I of God's help, in private as well as public, in order that such an one as I should "*edify* the "Church!" Building is a progressive work. The foundation must be well laid, and then the edifice rises, stone after stone being fixed in its right place, and well cemented. Afterwards follows the adorning, and all in due time is completed. And surely this impressive metaphor, too often overlooked, warns me to be pressing onward in the right time and in my right place, yet without hurry of spirit and confusion. He does much that loves much. And he that, in a calm, even course, is quietly seeking the glory of God and the salvation of souls will, sooner or later, obtain the blessing of God. But all must be wrought with a single eye to His glory, who worketh all in all. Self must be continually resisted and renounced by me. Praise must be feared. Admiration avoided.

God must be first and last in my heart. Let it at once humble and fill me with gratitude to reflect, that the effect produced by my endeavours might have been accomplished, had He so ordered, by another. "What have I that I have not received [3]?" "Not I, but the grace of God which was "in me [4]."

PRAYER.

O MOST MERCIFUL GOD, who knowest the very secrets of our hearts, and dost not forget whereof we are made, and rememberest that we are but dust, look graciously on thy servant, and teach me so to try my ways, that I may accuse and condemn myself, and not be brought into condemnation when I am judged by the Lord. Hear the intercession of thy Church for me and for all those who are preparing to offer themselves for the sacred Ministry of thy dear Son. Subdue all that is forward and presumptuous in my spirit. Illuminate the darkness of my

[3] 1 Cor. iv. 7. [4] 1 Cor. xv. 10.

soul. Strengthen me in my weak-heartedness. Raise me up when I am falling. Preserve me stedfast unto the end. And oh, most great and glorious God, when in the Day of Judgment I stand before the throne, covered with the accusations of a thrilling conscience, may the mighty Sacrifice of the Cross prevail for me; and justified by faith in the Blood of the Atonement, may I receive a full absolution, and be endued with a perfect righteousness, through the same Jesus Christ our Lord.

MEDITATION IV.

My mind was lately drawn to those prayers which the congregation is led by the Bishop to offer up on our behalf. Hence I cannot but remember those which are specially appointed for use in the Ember-weeks. Let me reflect awhile on these.

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, who hast purchased to thyself an universal

Church by the precious blood of thy dear Son, mercifully look upon the same; and at this time so guide and govern the minds of thy servants, the Bishops and Pastors of thy flock, that they may lay hands suddenly on no man, but faithfully and wisely make choice of fit persons to serve in the sacred Ministry of thy Church. And to those which shall be ordained to any holy function, give thy grace and heavenly benediction; that both by their life and doctrine they may set forth thy glory, and set forward the salvation of all men; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

ALMIGHTY GOD, the Giver of all good gifts, who of thy divine Providence hast appointed divers orders in thy Church, give thy grace, we humbly beseech Thee, to all those who are to be called to any office and administration in the same; and so replenish them with the truth of thy doctrine, and endue them with innocency of life, that they may faithfully serve before Thee to the glory of thy great name, and

the benefit of thy Church; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

The duty of Intercession is a high and holy one. The privilege is great. What, if God had forbidden sinners, such as we are, to presume to pray for others! On the contrary, God graciously encourages us in this act. Can I think of the command given to Job to pray for his erring friends, or of Abraham daring so far in his intercession with success? Can I recollect St. Paul's desire—"Pray for us?" Can I recall the divine Saviour's prayer, (St. John xvii.,) lifting up His eyes to heaven, and not be stirred up to pray for others fervently, lovingly, minutely? Nothing will more tend to the subjection of self, and the increase of a Christian spirit. "I "exhort that, first of all, supplications, "prayers, intercessions, and giving of "thanks, be made for all men[5]." O Lord, may I be partaker herein of the divine mind that was in our heavenly Master;

[5] 1 Tim. ii. 1.

and, forgetting myself, think much of, and commend unto Thee, the members of the mystical body. And oh, Thou blessed One, who art exalted to the right hand of the Father, ever living to make intercession for us, hear Thou in heaven the prayers of thy Church for faithful Pastors, that they may be given up to thy service, and "eaten "up by zeal for thy house[6]." It is "an "Universal Church," which the Father hath purchased unto Himself. Let my spirit embrace *all* who profess and call themselves Christians, in the bonds of love. Though unhappy differences of doctrine and discipline hinder our holding full communion with all, yet for all Christians can I, will I, ever pray. And may the mighty Price of Redemption, even the precious Blood of the Son of God, fill my soul with love to Him that hath loved us, and washed us in that Blood!

"Lay hands suddenly on no man[7]." When the size of our vast Dioceses comes

[6] Ps. lxix. 9. [7] 1 Tim. v. 22.

before the mind, ought we not to spread the case of our Bishops before the throne of God, that their labours and danger may be lessened? And that, having closer acquaintance with their candidates and Clergy, they may be spared the peril of receiving or retaining unworthy shepherds among the flock; and "that they may "faithfully and wisely make choice of fit "persons to serve in the sacred Ministry of "the Church?" And if Thou shalt so far honour thy unworthy servant, as to admit me to the Deacon's holy function, may I, and all thus richly gifted, partake of thy heavenly benediction, and set forth thy glory, and set forward the salvation of all men; through Jesus Christ.

How often does the Book of Common Prayer incidentally become the expounder of God's Holy Word! While some Christian communities hold a parity of orders, we are taught, in the interpretation given in the second prayer for Ember-weeks, that God of His divine Providence has

appointed *divers* orders in His Church. And, as St. Paul instructs us, that by His counsels exhibited in the Church on earth, the manifold wisdom of God is made known among other beings, we have good reason to pray for "all who are called to any office "or administration in the same, that they "may be replenished with the truth of His "doctrine, and endued with innocency of "life, and thus faithfully serve before Him "to the glory of His Name." I will often bring before my people the great duty of praying for their Pastors. Never will I forget to introduce the Ember Prayers in their proper season, carrying forth my spirit to the Church of Christ, in all its branches, in the east and in the west, in the north and in the south. The glory of God, and the benefit of Christ's Church, aimed at in a humble way, must be my grand object. And I will strive to remember, at the close of each day, in my prayers, those with whom I have conversed, or otherwise communicated, in that day, so that all may be borne in my intercession before Him, who alone can help

in our needs. I feel assured, that for many of my gifts and blessings, and for the removal of doubts, and solution of difficulties, I am indebted to the far-off prayers of brethren in Christ. "That they "all may be one." Lord, hasten this spirit in all diffusion of love, and then will thy kingdom come.

I notice, with reverential joy, that the Ordination Service is incorporated into that for the Holy Communion, and becomes one with it for the day. Our Church does not call "Orders" a Sacrament. This distinguishing title she attributes to those two highest Ordinances, in which the sign and the grace are both from Christ. Imposition of hands in ordaining is an Apostolic rite. It is not of our Lord's appointment, so far as we are taught. We do not however doubt that a grace of strength and guidance is imparted, as well as that a divine Commission belongs to the Ministry. The Church teaches us to believe in, and to

comfort our hearts with, the imparted grace of Holy Orders. Would God send forth His servants, and not fit them for their work?

It is one of the mercies of God to the Church, not only to have a Ministry from God, but to receive His divine instructions as to the mind and habits of those who are called into the sacred office. Let me resolve to read and meditate upon portions of St. Matt. x., the Epistles to Timothy and Titus, Acts xxi., Rev. ii. and iii., at the Ember seasons, *and on the anniversary days of my Ordination.* Shall I ever be able to spend those days like common days? The Lord give me grace, indeed, to observe them, from year to year, with increase of prayer, self-searching, and thankfulness!

THE EPISTLE. 1 *Tim.* iii. 8.

"LIKEWISE must the Deacons be grave, not "double-tongued, not given to much wine,

"not greedy of filthy lucre, holding the "mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. "And let these also first be proved; then "let them use the office of a Deacon, being "found blameless. Even so must their "wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faith- "ful in all things. Let the Deacons be the "husbands of one wife, ruling their children "and their own houses well. For they that "have used the office of a Deacon well, "purchase to themselves a good degree "and great boldness in the faith which is in "Christ Jesus."

The instruction in this Epistle, selected for the service, we ought to remember, is from God Himself. From Him we learn what *we* ought to be, who are aspiring even to the lowest grade in the Ministry.

"The Deacons must be grave." The Lord give me grace to put away all levity of heart, frivolity of manners, affectation of every kind in air and in dress, and to

strive after a natural seriousness, sedateness, and subjection of temper. And yet far from me be any strained effort, or any approach to moroseness. If my heart be fixed on the glory of God, and the salvation of souls, childish things will be disrelished, and a becoming sobriety of countenance, deportment, and conversation, quite consistent with cheerfulness, will diffuse itself around me, though still a young man. Solemnity often betrays affectation. Seriousness flows from devotedness of heart. The more in earnest I become about the things of God, the more *natural* I shall be; simply because I shall not be caring for man's judgment, but absorbed in the thought of pleasing God.

"Not double-tongued." Let me not be off my guard, because young men are said to be frank, open, sincere. We are all deceitful by nature. Few of us are able thoroughly to eradicate this cursed weed, which springs up for lack of faith. Did not Abraham and Isaac utter falsehood,

and David deceive, and St. Peter dissemble? And was not St. Barnabas carried away to dissimulation by evil example? I may be tempted to conceal my opinions on controverted subjects from being unduly biassed by others, friends, or men of eminence. I may be led to soften down expressions, or shrink from avowing what I believe to be truth, under the sneer of the worldly, or the impetuosity of the controversialist. I may be even tempted to be dishonest before the Bishop, or his Chaplain. Names frighten us. And a temper of sensitive mould, more capable of enduring than contending, must pray, and watch, and brace the inner man, in the strength of the Lord.

"Not given to wine." Perhaps there are no sins which more easily wither a Pastor's character than those of sensuality, covetousness, or intemperance. If it be known that *one* open symptom of such diseases has shown itself, then, *for a time*, the usefulness of such an one is destroyed; and this is the visible correction of an

offended Lord. True, the door of mercy is open. The temple of grace is before us; but the hill of repentance is steep and difficult, and the enemies many; and each sin leaves a scar, to our present discomfiture, and a sting to our after thoughts, though mercy be vouchsafed in the end for His sake who saveth εἰς τὸ παντελές. The servant of Christ must be one of mortified habits. Most men, it is said, can secure health with less of stimulant diet than is commonly indulged in. When I am alone, (and a Clergyman should retreat from society, rather than court it,) let the rein be tight; and when I am obliged to go abroad, the sense of God's presence will enable me to keep up a wise control. It cannot be good for any, so to indulge at ordinary meals as to need repose soon afterwards. The second meal, like the first in the day, should bring with it a sense of refreshment. "Whether ye "eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all "to the glory of God [s]."

[s] 1 Cor. x. 31.

"Not greedy of filthy lucre." It may be thought that the love of money is not the young man's vice. But "the heart is "deceitful above all things, and desperately "wicked: who can know it[9]?" Temptation may come upon me in the form of a more lucrative curacy, to the disparagement of one richer in spiritual things. To increase a small income, or to add to needless indulgences, I may be tempted to engage in tuition, to the neglect of the souls entrusted to me. I may be hoarding or insuring for the future, when the present hour calls on me for an open hand and a free heart. How shall I speak from the pulpit of laying up treasure in heaven, if my hearers estimate me as a keen, sharp man, knowing how to turn opportunities to advantage? How can I read such passages, in the presence of God and His Church, "Sell that ye have, and give "alms," if my heart be wedded to this world?

[9] Jer. xvii. 9.

"Holding the mystery of the faith in "a pure conscience." As the pious care of the Church failed not to insist on the vessels being pure, containing the life-giving emblems of the Redeemer's sacrifice, so must the souls and bodies of those be pure, who are the ordained instruments for imparting the same. To Angels and to Archangels, as St. Chrysostom observes, this honour is not given,—to minister under Christ in His Sanctuary upon earth. How shall I not tremble to bear my humblest part in such a work, lest in an hour of weakness I bring down, like Uzzah, the fierce wrath of the Lord on me! It is not enough to be willing to run; we must be "proved first; and then we may "use the office of a Deacon, being found "blameless." The word in the original, we know, is most forcible—δοκιμαζέσθωσαν. In the case of jewels submitted to the lapidary, it must be seen whether they be really precious, or mere imitation; and if not blameless, in the highest sense, (for in God's sight shall no man living be justi-

fied,) at least let my life be such as to be open to no specific charge of error or iniquity. Bless me, O Lord, in myself and in my household, and consecrate me in so using the Office I seek, as to earn a step, through grace, into the higher stewardship of Christ's kingdom.

PRAYER.

O MOST GRACIOUS GOD, whose kingdom is everlasting, and whose mercy is infinite, dispose my heart for the great work on which I am now preparing to enter. Blessed be thy Holy Name for teaching us what Thou wouldest have us to be in the Ministry, and for pouring down the grace which can alone enable us to live according to thy will. Infuse, O Lord, a spirit of seriousness and devotedness into thy servant's heart; make me gentle, and meek, and temperate, and sincere. Take from me the love of this world, and set my affection on heavenly things. May I always bear in mind how my God doth rule all things in heaven and earth. And,

following thy blessed will, may I strive to order my household in all purity, and charitableness, and quietness. And thus going on in thy strength, may I, in due time, be admitted to a nearer access unto the throne, in the exercise of the awful duties of the Priesthood; and, finally, in the boundless gifts of thy glorious goodness, be received as a King and a Priest before the throne of God; through Him, and His mercy and compassion, even Jesus Christ, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end.

MEDITATION V.

THE Church has appointed another portion of Holy Scripture, which I must make a part of my solemn meditation.

"Then the twelve called the multitude "of the disciples unto them, and said, It "is not reason that we should leave the "word of God, and serve tables. Where-"fore, brethren, look ye out among you "seven men of honest report, full of the

"Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may "appoint over this business. But we will "give ourselves continually to prayer, and "to the ministry of the word. And the "saying pleased the whole multitude. And "they chose Stephen, a man full of faith, "and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and "Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and "Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte of "Antioch; whom they set before the "Apostles; and when they had prayed, "they laid their hands on them. And the "word of God increased, and the number "of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem "greatly, and a great company of the "Priests were obedient to the faith [10]."

Some have doubted whether this be the real commencement of the Diaconate. But I will always follow the guidance of the Church in her collective wisdom, where it lies open to me. And I find the Church thus expressing herself in the Common Prayer: "Almighty God, who by thy "divine Providence hast appointed divers

[10] Acts vi. 2—7.

"Orders of Ministers in thy Church, and "didst *inspire thine Apostles to choose into* "*the Order of Deacons, the first martyr,* "*St. Stephen, with others,* mercifully behold "these thy servants now called to the like "office and administration." Teach me, O Lord, ever to bear in mind, that, although I am about to be admitted into the lowest grade of the Ministry, yet that Office is of thine appointment. Thou dost never send forth any without fitting them for the work to which Thou dost call them. "Re- "plenish me so with thy doctrine, and so "adorn me with innocency of life, that "both by word and good example I may "faithfully serve Thee in this Office to the "glory of thy name, and the edification of "thy Church, through Jesus Christ."

When we read that during the forty days that our Lord delayed His departure into heaven, "He spake of the things "pertaining to the kingdom of God," may we not believe it possible that He gave some directions for the formal establish-

ment and guidance of His Church; that even the several grades may have been duly included, and *that* of the Deacons consequently not omitted? In the emergency which arises, as related Acts vi., the Apostles seem at once prepared with a plan. Is it too much (I mean it in all reverence) to suppose that the Lord had already foreshown the coming want, and taught the mode of supplying it? God in His wisdom in the Creation, and course of Providence, is often observed to make one thing contain and supply another. We do not the less admire the golden fringes of a cloud because it is usefully storing up rain for the thirsty earth, and is soon to melt into drops that water the furrows of the field. And thus the temporary office of the Almoner quickly passed into that of the Deacon: and the Deacon, St. Philip, is in Acts viii. 21 spoken of as an "Evangelist;" and the wisdom with which St. Stephen spake, clearly showed that he was elected into an office beyond that of serving tables; it was required of him to

be "one of good report, and full of the "Holy Ghost and wisdom."

Let me well consider the solemn words of the twelve: "It is not meet that we "should leave the word of God, and serve "tables; we will give ourselves continually "to the word of God and to prayer." It cannot be doubted that the Ministers of Christ are too often called away from their special work of reconciling souls to God, and stablishing them in the faith, and ministering before the Lord in His house, to the discharge of secular duties, which might as well, or better, be performed by a Layman. The vexatious burden of the Magistracy may at some future day be urged on me, or the guardianship of funds, or trusteeships; as if a Minister's time were more at his own disposal than that of other men. What! will there be no call on me for study, in order to expound and apply the Word of God? Are there no sinners in the parish that need to be awakened? No backsliders to be recalled? No sick to be visited? No youth to be instructed?

No dying men and women, whose peace is hardly made with an offended Lord?

"Meditate upon these things; give "thyself WHOLLY to them[1]." This is the divine command. The less there is found in my mind of a desire for secular pleasures and worldly occupations, the more room will there be within me for thoughts of God, and longings for communion with Him; the more inclined shall I be to "give myself continually to the word of "God and to prayer." Surely, in the most densely populated parish, I must be careful to find time daily to read some portion of God's Word in the Greek Testament; but, if it may be, in the Hebrew also. I must make a duty of early rising, and keeping early hours generally; avoiding much society; entering it rarely; and then regarding it as an opening for usefulness. By having a fixed hour for every thing that is to be done, by careful choice

[1] 1 Tim. iv. 15.

of books, by wise economy of time, I shall find my day happily and profitably gliding on; while I shall provide successive opportunities for devotion, study, sermons, and parochial labour. I must learn, as a prudent man once said, to "pack minutes." If I cannot pray and meditate for a whole hour at a time, I may for a quarter of an hour, in the busiest period of the day. If I cannot read a whole chapter in Hebrew or Greek, I may master a few verses, and carry the matter forth with me for meditation over the heath, or through the winding, shady lanes, or the streets and alleys. And if I make a rule not to take up lighter pages before a later hour in the day, I shall hereby secure a right place for the more valuable occupations of mind.

Of the seven Deacons it was required that they should be men "full of the Holy "Ghost." What words can convey the force and fulness of this expression? Must it not at least, and in the lowest sense, include an enlightened understand-

ing; a spirit full of love to the Redeemer; a heart penetrated with a sense of unworthiness before Him; a soul hungering and thirsting after righteousness, and labouring after meetness for heavenly things? A right-minded Minister is one whose desire, as taught by the Holy Ghost, is, not to go to heaven alone, but while living to the glory of God, to be helpful to others in the way. If this sign be not found, let Tekel be written on me. I am "weighed "and found wanting." If ever the vast thought has been realized, that at our Baptism the principle of a new life derived from the incarnate Son of God was superadded to our natural constituents of soul and body, now let the awful truth be felt, when I am going forth, not only seeking to save my own soul, but the souls of others. Now, let the deep reflection of hope occupy my mind, that I am one with the Father, through Christ, by the Spirit dwelling in me. What may we not effect as instruments of Him who hath so richly gifted His servants in strengthening the hands of others? He, who putteth His

precious treasures in such vessels of earth, will not fail us in dispensing them to His honour and glory.

The seven were, as prototypes, to be also "full of wisdom." Valuable far beyond knowledge is this gift of God to the Minister of Christ, though not independent of it. This is the grace which is *promised* to me if I ask in faith. "Lord, I believe; "help thou mine unbelief[2]." I have faith in thy word, but give me more faith. How often shall I be in a difficulty as to the right path of duty! How often will others be applying to me for relief in their doubts, counsel in their plans, healing for their wounded consciences, comfort in their sorrows! And for me to know that I may confidently appeal to my Saviour, and have my own mind guided to be a light to others, what a source of consolation is this! By this inward illumination I shall be taught when to wait, and

[2] Mark ix. 24.

when to act; when to retrace a step, and when to go forward; what to advise others, and how to proceed myself. I shall, if I have faith, be like David when before Keilah; and shall be assured either of a ready response, a merciful withholding, or a gracious overruling. I shall hereby be enabled to discern the lineaments of character in others, and guard against them, or be of use to them. Fools mistake cunning for wisdom; and the worldly-wise imagine all included in what they call prudence. But Christian wisdom is as much above the one, as it is beyond the other. It is only when viewed as a grace, that wisdom attains its full proportion, and exercises its entire powers. Then it is perceived that "the secret of the Lord "is with them that fear Him, and that he "shows them His covenant."

"Whom they set before the Apostles, "and when they had prayed, they laid "their hands upon them." May I, without giving way to excitement, regard my

ever-blessed Saviour as the real source of this divine authority; as actually and really present, no less at this time, when I, His unworthy servant, am set before the Bishop for receiving my commission, than when the seven Deacons were ordered by the Apostles; and may He enable me to regard Him as walking amid the golden Candlesticks, giving to each the oil of His grace, according to their needs, and His own boundless wisdom and glory.

PRAYER.

O BLESSED JESUS, who didst so meekly and mercifully tarry on earth with thy Church after thy Resurrection from the grave, and didst ofttimes appear to the bereaved Apostles with words of grace and tokens of divine authority, and didst promise to be with us "even to the end of "the world," have compassion upon thy Church in these days of disunion and peril. Bless that branch of thy Church which from early days has been planted in these lands. Strengthen herein that which

is weak. Supply that which is wanting. Correct that which is amiss. Where there is any part corrupt, purify and restore it. And grant that I may ever remember mine infinite obligations unto Thee, O Lord, who hast opened unto me a door of hope for entrance into this high Office. Make me to "give myself continually to "prayer, and the ministration of thy word." Enrich me with the gifts of the Holy Ghost, and of wisdom, for my sacred work. And let thy hand of mercy be ever laid on me for right guidance to others and holy government of myself, to thy honour and glory, O blessed Saviour and Redeemer, Jesus. *Amen.*

MEDITATION VI.[3]

THE mind is now, in some measure, prepared for the solemn vow about to be taken. Let me hope that, when I have

[3] The Oath of the Queen's Sovereignty will be considered, as it is purposed, in the Meditations on the Ordination Service for Priests.

been examined, I shall be approved, and be presented to the Lord through His ministering servant. The heart might be expected to respond heartily to the demands of our spiritual Father, of itself. It needed not, as some might think, a prescribed form of words to convey the assurance of sincerity. But is it not safer for us to distrust ourselves, and to have the answers recorded, that we should have time for meditating on them, and for advisedly, soberly, and in the fear of God adopting them as our own? Thus may each word be weighed beforehand, and the peril avoided, of a rash, unpremeditated vow.

If it be a needful command, "keep thy "foot when thou goest to the house of "God," how important, in such an hour, to "set a watch before my mouth, and "keep the door of my lips!" What a question am I soon to answer before God! "Do you trust that you are inwardly "moved by the Holy Ghost to take upon

" you this Office and Ministration, to serve " God for the promoting of His glory, and " the edifying of His people?" And I am to answer, "I trust so." It is an awful thought, that such a word should ever be spoken by one who is not in earnest in desiring to be a helper in saving souls. What should I deserve, if, after *such* a declaration, I be found scarcely differing in mind and life from others of the laity around, and be distinguished only by some slight peculiarity of dress? What tokens of God's wrath can be too severe, if I make such an avowal as this lightly, deceitfully, or in a hardened state of mind? On the other hand, I may not needlessly alarm and distress myself, for God is all-merciful.

I have to do with this God of infinite mercy. Let me not encourage ungrounded scruples. Though my sins have been many and grievous, let not the blessed vision of Calvary be obscured. Let not the gloom of Repentance darken Faith, when Faith should be pressing on towards Hope. While I search my heart anxiously, let

me not unnecessarily suspect its sincerity. Have I humbled my soul before God, and sought reconciliation through faith in Christ? Have I sincerely prayed to God to refuse my services openly, if it were His will to shut me out from the Ministry? Have I taken counsel of my parents, and sought the advice of good and judicious friends, and faithful Ministers of God? Have I revolved my motives again and again without being able to pass sentence on myself as a hypocrite, trifler, or impenitent?

The Church does not, in her wisdom, demand of me, Do you *feel* that you are inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost? This would be a delusive test. Feelings and affections are implanted not to direct, but to impel our course. Fear makes me cautious. Anger gives zeal. Pity leads to deeds of sympathy. Joy carries men buoyantly over difficulties. But the *principle* on which I am acting is to be my solemn inquiry—*Am I herein striving to please God?*

Do I *trust?* Am I persuaded on suffi-

cient grounds? Does my turn of mind incline me to *seek* the world, or *retreat* from it as dangerous? Am I (let me search honestly before the One true God), am I desirous of wealth, title, notice, rank, advancement? or do I think these should be approached with fear and trembling, lest they usurp the place and sovereignty of God within the soul? Have I the desire to forego my own wishes and ease, and to labour in bringing others under the self-denying, safe, and gentle yoke of Christ? When I look forward to the work of the Ministry, does the thought of teaching the ignorant, of warning, yea even, if need be, of reproving and rebuking—does this seem troublesome and hateful? Can I discern any *worldly* influence mingling with my motives? Does the notion of ease or rank, as a clergyman, or the thought of access to good society, or the hope of preferment, unduly sway my mind? At this moment, if a lucrative civil office for life were offered me, would I take my hand from the plough and look back? Or am I prepared to endure the

reproach of Christ? Had I rather be a door-keeper in the House of the Lord than sit on a throne? Do I prefer being a poor curate, to being clothed, as a layman, with purple and fine linen? Oh! if I am only in *earnest*, God, who hath given me this desire, will accept, strengthen me, and lead me on. In His very Presence my heart will beat high with the thought of being His household servant. My spirit will rejoice to go forth under the great Captain of my salvation. He who has put within me the desire of warring under Him a good warfare, will lead me on to combat and to victory. I will not weaken my mind by thinking that I am deceiving myself. "Blessed be the Lord who "teacheth my hands to war, and my fingers "to fight[4]." I hope to answer from my heart, "I *trust* that I am moved by the "Holy Ghost to take upon me this Office "and Ministration. I *do trust* so."

It is only as a subject of the Holy

[4] Ps. cxliv. 1.

Spirit's teaching, that I dare to make the appeal to my conscience before the living God. Is it not the Comforter, as promised by Christ for abiding with us, to Whom we owe "all holy desires, all good "counsels, and all just works?" What desire can come under the name of good, if the desire of saving souls be not there found? What counsel is holy, if that which regards the rescue of immortal beings from ruin be not holy? What work that man can undertake is just, if to co-operate with the Lord of heaven and earth, in being a worker with God in bringing His creatures to the purchased salvation, be not a just work? I know that of myself nothing can come. I feel assured that all that *is* good is from God, and that His inward workings are marred too often by man's folly and presumption. But I know how long He bears with us, if we will but "frame our doings" to keep nigh unto Him; and I feel assured, that, having (as I hope) chosen me, He will supply me with armour, and endue me with courage, and give direction for the

great combat with the enemy. Is it not to this good Spirit that I owe every impulse of charity, all curbing of temper and passion, every throb of penitence, each movement of faith and hope? and if He thus sanctify me in myself, He will sanctify me for the aid of others. If He make the Word of God nourish *me*, may I not expect that He will render me a fit instrument for nourishing others with its divine truth? If He hath washed me with the Water, and purified me by the Blood, of the Covenant, shall I not hope to be employed under Him in healing and restoring the wounded, the fainting, and the outcast? Satan's never-failing aim is to destroy men's souls. The Son of Man hath come, and the Spirit hath descended, to save and to give life. In a secure and consecrated channel doth He transmit the authority, and the effectual blessing with it, for drawing all men unto Him. No matter whether His Ministers be poor in this world's goods, or persecuted, or despised, or martyred by a violent onset or protracted hatred. If they can bear away

but one soul, and see it safe in the day of the Lord, this is the reward they desire. The heavens, I am taught, will shortly be rolled up as a scroll. The earth will be in flames beneath our feet. The world will be assembled around the Judgment-seat of Christ. Then, O my soul! to be aware not only that thou hast, as united to Christ, escaped the wrath of the Judge, but to behold some souls whom God hath made thee the means of saving, through Christ, from the pit of destruction, and of quickening and stablishing in the faith,—this be thy ambition, thy pleasure, thy glory in eternity.

I would humbly hope that there is therefore no presumption in ascribing the desire for entering Holy Orders to the influence of the blessed Comforter on my heart. Would it not be the height of self-righteousness to imagine such a purpose, so unselfish and unearthly, to come from my *own* heart? Whence, then, but from the Fountain of Grace can it proceed? "Not unto

"us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy "Name be the praise given." And oh, my good God! confirm in me the desire, and stablish the endeavour, to live for thy glory. And may my after-life show that the same gracious Hand, which is about to be laid on me from above, is still upholding me, and making me a blessing unto others.

Yet, once more, let me try myself by the thought, whether I may not be more fitted for doing good as a layman, than as an ambassador of Christ. Alas! have I not seen and known those who would have been better and happier if they had not assumed an office for which (without, I hope, uncharitableness of heart in me) they have never seemed disposed or qualified? Have I not witnessed the disrelish of mind at having to provide their sermons, to visit the sick, to labour in the school? What diseased ones have these physicians strengthened? What sick ones have they healed? When did they bind up the

broken, or seek for that which was lost? Should not this once more send *me* to my knees before God, with prayer for *my* course to be made plain. If I have any remaining doubts, let me delay. If, however, I still can discern the sincere purpose to help others in their way heavenwards, and the profound desire to serve God, rather than to rise or take my ease in the world, from this hour let all scruples vanish. Let me rest securely on the promised support of Christ, and feel assured that He can, and that He will bear with me, and guide me, and uphold me, and that in His strength my weakness shall be made strong.

PRAYER.

O EVERLASTING GOD, the strength of all that come unto Thee in the name of thy dear Son, the Light of those who sit in darkness, and are weary, and distrustful of themselves, look graciously upon me in this hour of fearfulness and trembling. Show me, O Lord, by heavenly tokens of

grace and providence, whether Thou hast called me, or whether I be running before I am sent. Teach me to discern my vocation from thy Holy Spirit; and to trust, with all the power of living faith, that I am moved by that Holy Comforter to take upon me this Office and Ministration. I know that I am not worthy of such honour from above. But, my soul's desire is to make that Gospel known to others, which I would humbly trust will prove the power of God unto salvation for them and for my own soul. O Lord, fulfil the wish of my heart, that I may save myself and them that hear me. And let my trust in thy mercy be strengthened by the stretching forth of thy mighty arm, that signs and wonders of grace may be wrought in the name of thy holy Child Jesus, to the glory of thy Name, and the edification of thy Church. Hear me, O Lord, through Him that ever liveth to intercede for us, Jesus Christ our Lord.

MEDITATION VII.

"Do you think that you are truly called "according to the will of our Lord Jesus "Christ, and the due Order of this realm, "to the Ministry of the Church?"—"I "think so." Though my inward call has, I trust, been made clear and satisfactory to my mind, I must not fail to inquire as to the validity of my outward call. If I can satisfy myself that, according to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, I may come forward and seek to be an ambassador in His Name, then I may with less difficulty consider and discover whether I duly recognize and honour this branch of His Church; and if I have complied with her requisitions thus far, and am prepared to devote myself to the doctrine as interpreted, and the discipline enforced by her, in His divine service.

My thoughts are at once carried to the great question of the foundation of our

Church, and the validity of her Orders. Help me, O Lord, to walk about Zion, and go round about her, and tell not the towers thereof only, but search the very foundations, and see whether they rest on Christ crucified. In so great a matter let not thy servant deceive himself, but be assured, on true grounds, that the Church in this land is of thy planting; that her Orders are thy constituted channels of sacred authority for the Priesthood; her Sacraments thy rich conveyancers of grace; that thy Word is safe in her hands, and that Thou, Lord, art dwelling in the midst of us as a chosen people.

Easter was kept at a different time, and Baptism administered in a different manner from that upheld by the Church of Rome, when St. Augustine, 596 A.D., came over as a missionary from that Church to England. This, as well as the character of the Liturgy, resembling the Gallican, proves the early settlement of our Church, and that her origin is not from Rome. We had no interference from Rome for nearly

600 years. Clearly, then, we are not bound by the supremacy of the Pope; otherwise, our Church was no Church till Augustine came over. But how is this consistent with the testimony of early Fathers, who speak of the British Church as pure in doctrine, amid heresy? with the early Councils, which numbered our Bishops among their attendants? If this point be clear, as it is to my mind, I behold her without the trammels of Roman supremacy for so long a time; afterwards, suffering under this tyranny; and at length, rejecting a power which had been forced on her. And this was brought about with the general concurrence of the Sovereign, the Bishops, in almost every case, and the people, who had been bred in the Church of Rome.

I shall not, therefore, be intimidated by the vain claims and threats of Rome, when I can trace the succession of our Bishops from our time to a period when we were brought into closer communion with Rome; and, *beyond that*, to a period when we were, as we now are, independent of

Rome; our scattered Church having its Archbishop and six Bishops under him, even at the hour of St. Augustine's arrival. The garden of the Church was weeded at the Reformation; but it was the *same* garden which had been formed and planted by the hands of an Apostle, or of Apostolic men. The river of grace which, at God's smiting of the Rock, began to flow in these lands in the primitive age, continued to flow. It was, indeed, muddied and defiled by much that was erroneous in doctrine and discipline. But at length it emerged, the same river, purified, and diffusing far and wide the fertilizing streams of truth and love. The Roman party who separated from our Church, and have set up another communion, must be regarded as in schism. We pray for them. But we cannot recognize them as, in any sense, a pure or a safe branch of the Church.

I love to meditate on our Church as thus proving its ancient and independent

source; for thus I am led to comprehend and insist on the validity of her Orders. Could I offer myself as a Minister of this Church, unless I felt assured that through her Orders I should receive from the Lord Himself the right to admit into, or repel from, the fold, to preach His Word, to hold forth the Bread of Life, and the Cup of Salvation? The answer which I am, on due reflection, thus prepared to give, not only asserts the validity of Orders, as conveyed in the Anglican Church, but it protests against all attempts to destroy her unity; it repudiates all irregular Ministrations. "That they all may be one [5]." In this prayer of our Lord, I recognize a living body, organized in grace, founded by our Saviour Himself, and extending gradually, under Him, through all lands, and throughout all time. What need have we to cry unto the Lord, that all who profess and call themselves Christians may once more be brought together in

[5] St. John xvii.

unity of spirit, in the bond of peace, and in righteousness of life?

How does it fill one's heart to look back to those ages, in which the Christian family, though separated by place and circumstances, were one in spirit! I behold a Christian going forth to some distant country. He carries with him his "literæ formatæ" from his Bishop. Forthwith, wherever he goes, he is welcomed as a member of the heavenly family; he has ready access to the Church, to the Altar, to the hearts of the people. Alas! how different is Christendom now! How rent and harassed is every kingdom and city, town and village! If the teaching of the Church were dutifully listened to, these things could not be to such an extent. The Church regards herself in the light of a parent. As a parent—so far from inviting discussion, she sets down any attempt to question her parental authority. She required of me, and of all her children, to receive the truth which she has handed

down in a fixed mould. Her Creeds, her Articles, her Catechism she teaches us, as the depository of divine truth, to adopt. The Church is the "witness and the keeper "of truth." In this character I am bound to honour her. This principle, recognized and followed out, will be more likely to lead me to the paths of genuine humility, than judging from my own crude notions, or taking the single opinions of individuals, however learned and pious. It may be said that Rome, in this way, teaches error; and that if we are to bow down to the Church, we may fall into error, without possibility of escape. But is not Christ with His Church? Has He not afforded the chance of escape from error in other lands, and has not the opportunity been often lost? Was not the way opened in our own, and has it not been secured? The good Lord has ever, in due time, appeared for His Church. He did so when Arius would have poisoned it with the "worm-"wood" of his heresy. He raised up Constantine, when Diocletian would have annihilated (to human sight) the very name

of Christian. By His guardianship, Charlemagne, Alfred, and other nursing Fathers, the faithful Councils, the learned Divines, the Martyrs, the Confessors, the Reformers, have been instruments, from time to time, of advancing truth, and repressing error. But the interference must be legitimate. The authority must be manifest. The individual opinion may be formed; but let it not be rashly and presumptuously opposed to the collective judgment. The right of private judgment is one thing; the responsibility is another.

The Church in this realm, according to the feeling of bygone days, was the State, in a sacred point of view. And though there have been some jarring disturbances of the spiritual and civil Constitution, yet I, for one, am thankful in beholding an Apostolic branch of the Church upheld by the State in this kingdom. I pray God it may never be otherwise. I pray that my mind may be kept firm in unswerving allegiance to our Church. I desire to be

preserved from the overwhelming corruptions of Rome, and from that undistinguishing Protestantism, which, to be consistent, must include the denier of our Lord's Deity. From my heart and soul I love the Church of England; and, in avowing my belief that I am about to be rightly called to her Ministrations, I declare before Thee, O God, my duteous attachment to her, and desire to spend my days for her promotion, and, if need be, to lay down my life at thy bidding, for her preservation.

PRAYER.

O MOST HOLY SAVIOUR! who didst love thy Church so as to give thyself for it, and hast commanded us to follow, in this and all other ways, thy holy steps, teach me to believe in thy Presence shining in the midst thereof, and giving light and guidance around. It is not in man, of his own power and wisdom, to see what is good for promoting thy service. But, O Lord! teach us to watch for the motions

of thy providence, to look out for the signals of thy grace, and to be ever ready to do or to suffer that which seemeth most effectual for advancing thy heavenly kingdom. Make me, O Lord, humble, and distrustful of my own judgment. Incline me to listen to the wise counsels, and the safe decrees and decisions of those met together before Thee for the stablishing of the peace of thy Church. And grant that I may be taught by Thee to be obedient to thy will, so far as it is reflected in the ordinances of this branch of thy Church; and that I may be thankful for being a member, and for the hope of becoming a Minister of the same. Make me dutifully to be observant of all her rules, and to love our Zion with a calm and stedfast love; and looking neither to the right hand nor to the left, may I attain to the perfection of thy kingdom, in rest, and peace, and glory; through Jesus Christ our Saviour.

MEDITATION VIII.

"Do you unfeignedly believe all the Ca-
"nonical Scriptures of the Old and New
"Testament?"—"I do believe them."

Christians, in general, may be well content to receive the Holy Scriptures on the faith of the Church. To the charge of the Church we know that they were entrusted, and have by her care been handed down. But, before I go forth as a Minister, I must do more than simply believe, myself. I must be able to show the foundation unto others. I must be ready to defend the truth against the sceptic, and explain a difficulty to the unlearned. I must be able to relieve a doubting mind, and to clear away scruples. "Be ready to give "to every man a reason of the hope that "is in you[6]." Lord, send down thy light and thy truth into my heart, that I may, indeed, be able to strengthen, and bring

[6] 1 St. Pet. iii. 15.

back, direct, and comfort the souls of thy people, as they need guidance! Oh, do Thou make me a ready Scribe, fully instructed in the things pertaining to the kingdom of God!

I shall be more able to do this work, if I am found devoutly meditating therein by day and by night, carrying forth within me some precious portion of God's Word, as I go to and fro in the parish, and turning the divine truth, as God's grace shall enable me, into the very substance of my own soul. What promises are there, in God's Holy Word, to the weary, and penitent, and sorrowful! What examples for making our way clear! How plain and forcible is the divine command! How terrible the threatenings of wrath from God! What miracles of mercy beam before the eye! What astounding prophecies, fulfilling, as in the case of the Jews, even now in my sight, yet delivered more than 3000 years ago! What a boon to the world has been given in the perfectness

of our blessed Lord's example! How suited is such a revelation of grace and mercy to my ruined condition, as a guilty and a defiled sinner! And when I think of so pure and uncompromising a religion, rapidly spreading as it did against all the violence, the cruelty, the art, the learning of the world, and, like the stone cut from the mountain without hands, triumphing over the kingdom of darkness, I am constrained to say, and I would hope, by such plain and convincing thoughts, to make the hesitating mind exclaim, "This is the "finger of God[7]." I know full well that men are slow in giving up their false convictions. It is either the love of this world in some form, or pride of heart, which makes men hold out against the message of truth. Instead of assailing with argument, it will be better for me in many cases to try and touch the conscience. And if a sense of deficiency before God, and a fear of His displeasure, can be brought home from above to the mind, who can tell that God

[7] Exod. viii. 19.

may not, by His Spirit, make me the happy instrument of setting the Saviour on the cross before the wounded soul, and cause me to hear the sound from the lips of such an one, "God, be merciful to me "a sinner?"

"Will you diligently read the same "unto the people assembled in the Church, "where you shall be appointed to serve?" —"I will." Let me never forget, for an instant, that the Holy Scripture is truly the word of the living God. When I am reading to the people *that* Word, it is verily God who is speaking, although He condescends to use the lips of such a sinful being as I am. What need have I even to *handle*, to *open*, and to *shut* the Holy Book with reverence! To meditate beforehand on its contents, that I may feel and enter into the full sense of the Bible, and thus impart the meaning, especially to the more ignorant of the congregation. How careful has our Church shown herself in providing the fullest course of sacred in-

struction, requiring the Old Testament to be read through once, and the New Testament three times in the year! Even under the old Covenant I find it solemnly required—"Thou shalt read the law before "all Israel in their hearing, that they may "learn, and fear the Lord their God, and "observe to do all the words of that law; "and that their children which have not "known may hear and fear the Lord [8]." I ought not to forget that the learned and holy Hooker does not hesitate to include the faithful *reading* of the Scriptures in the congregation, under the head of *preaching*. I shall be more likely to comprehend and convey the meaning, if I study the Scriptures in the original languages. I must read to the heart. I heard a devout person once mention that a poor man had said to him, "I have learned the meaning "of Scripture better by hearing a certain "Clergyman *read* the Bible, than from all "the preaching I ever heard." This is great encouragement to take pains. And

[8] Deut. xxxi. 13.

while I should abhor myself, if in doing such a work I were thinking of mere effect, I know how great the difference is in listening to those who simply and reverently, but expressively read, and those who utter the words without distinctness, or feeling. Surely, it would be unnatural for me to read the solemn denunciations of the Prophets, the didactic rules of the Proverbs, the shouts of praise or cries for mercy in the Psalms, the varied narrative of the Gospels, and the fervid arguments of St. Paul, all with the same tone, and in the same manner. Never let me presume to open the Sacred Volume without first offering from my heart and soul a prayer for ministering its holy truth in a spirit suitable to the special presence of God in the midst of His congregation. "As for "me, O Lord, I will come into thy house, "even upon the multitude of thy mercies; "and in thy fear will I worship toward thy "holy temple[9]."

[9] Ps. v. 7.

Most seriously would I lay it to heart, that when I pledge myself by a vow to read the Holy Scriptures diligently to the people assembled, I bind myself to afford the opportunity to the people of hearing God's Word read and preached as frequently as possible. The *Daily Service* is the only standard, according to the rules of the Church, by which this avowal can be measured in its fulness. Far be it from me to blame others, who conceive themselves compelled, by a variety of causes, to forego this privilege. But I cannot satisfy myself to be absent, nor will I debar the Simeons and Annas (few though they be) from closer communion with God. And I must think those most happy, who have and enjoy the blessed boon; and who "depart not from the "temple, serving God with fastings and "prayers night and day."

But let me again observe that it is required of me to perform this duty in the place where I am appointed to serve.

Lord, let me ever remember that Thou art the God of "order and not of confu-"sion." Keep me humbly laborious in my own appointed sphere of labour; let me not uncharitably blame my brethren, nor perversely intrude into the vineyard of others; but seek quietly and patiently to do my own duty in that station of the Ministry to which, in thy providence, Thou shalt call me, through Jesus Christ.

PRAYER.

BLESSED LORD, who hast caused all Holy Scriptures to be written for our learning, that we may in such wise hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that, by patience and comfort of thy Holy Word, we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life which Thou hast given us in our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

PRAYER.

ALMIGHTY GOD, the Fountain of all wisdom, the Giver of all our gifts both in

body and soul, teach me ever to remember that it is Thou who makest man's mouth, and givest or withholdest a ready utterance and power of speech. Lord, though I be not eloquent, yet let me not fail to minister before Thee, preaching thy Word in season and out of season, with such entire reverence, such godly desire of working with thy grace in lifting up the hearts of thy people to the throne above, that in all things I may promote thy glory and the edification of thy Church; and may finally be admitted into that heavenly company where the blessed ones rest not day or night, crying, "Holy, Holy, Holy, "Lord God of Hosts. Heaven and earth "are full of thy glory. Glory be to Thee, "O Lord Most High."

MEDITATION IX.

"It appertaineth to the Office of a Dea-"con, in the Church where he shall be "appointed to serve, to assist the Priest "in Divine Service, and specially when

"he ministereth the Holy Communion, "and to help him in the distribution "thereof, and to read Holy Scriptures and "Homilies in the Church; and to instruct "the youth in the Catechism; in the ab- "sence of the Priest to baptize infants, "and to preach, if he be admitted thereto "by the Bishop. And furthermore, it is "his Office, where provision is so made, "to search for the sick, poor, and impo- "tent people of the Parish, to intimate "their estates, names, and places where "they dwell, unto the Curate, that by his "exhortation they may be relieved with "the alms of the Parishioners, or others. "Will you do this gladly and willingly?

"*Answer.* I will so do, by the help of "God."

How can I be sufficiently thankful for the many words of warning and instruction set before me in this holy service? How full, but almost appalling, is the enumeration of the duties which (if God will) I am soon to be called on to discharge!

Shall I not, if life be spared, have cause, in instances without number, to charge my first ministrations with ignorance, vain glory, rashness, negligence, perhaps even error? Far, far from me, be the thought, that I am about to exhibit any striking points of zeal, talent, eloquence, or judgment, and to work some wonderful change in a parish! "Old Adam," I have been warned, "will be too hard for young "Melancthon." Let me begin *tremblingly;* conscious of much unworthiness, and great imperfection; and remember that my first Office is to "*assist* the Priest in the Church "where I shall be appointed to serve." The good Lord give me a spirit to learn from, and never presume to teach my elders.

Perhaps my trial may be for some time to officiate in a parish imperfectly showing forth the power of the Gospel in the Church. The doors of the sanctuary may perhaps be found closed from Sunday to Sunday. There may be no catechising.

The Word of God may have been preached formally, with little regard to Christ Jesus, and Him crucified. The Holy Communion may be ministered only three or four times in a whole year. Schools there may be none; or they may be inefficient. The temple of God may be unclean, damp, and unsightly, and the behaviour of the congregation listless or irreverent, and the attendance scanty. In such a state of things, may God give me grace to be watchful for my opportunity of co-operating in the amendment of the system, while I am lowly, and patient, and respectful towards the responsible head of the parish. There is much that, with God's mighty blessing, can yet be effected, under all this painful discouragement. I can, as it is required of me, offer up in secret the prayers of the Church twice in the day; and thus join in spirit with the assemblies of the faithful at home and abroad. I can and will, with the Divine help, offer the few permitted services in the Church, with reverence and simple fervour. I can and will, God's grace enabling me, preach ser-

mons full of the truth; of an earnest, affectionate, heart-searching character; looking to God for the dews of His grace on the sowing of the seed. I can and will, in the strength of God, visit from house to house, admonishing, comforting, and stablishing the souls of the people. And I can and will be ever labouring in the Lord, to enrich my own mind with larger stores of divine knowledge, and to grow in grace.

The Church reminds me, that I must be ready to help the Priest in the distribution of the elements at the celebration of the Holy Eucharist. Vouchsafe, O God, in that solemn moment, to bring to my remembrance the greatness of the Mystery in which I shall be engaged; that, while I see the symbols, I may realize the spiritual Presence of the Lord; and contemplate Christ's authority establishing these sacred rites; and may hear, by faith, His Voice blessing them, and discern His mercy reaching out my pardon;

His Holy Spirit sanctifying my spirit; His blessed Self making intercession for me at the eternal Altar in the heavens, and bringing me into closer union with Him and His Church. And as thine infinite arm of mercy is reached unto us, so may my arm of faith reach unto Thee, O blessed Jesus[1]!

In the absence of the Priest, I am permitted to baptize infants. And ever may I recal my own most sacred vows, and rejoice in the precious gifts of the new life then begun in me, and increased continually to the faithful in the Holy Eucharist, and may I strive to grow unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ[2].

I am required also to instruct the youth in the Catechism. Should my Rector, as I heartily hope he will, sanction public

[1] Vid. Bp. Taylor's Devout Communicant.

[2] Eph. iv. 13.

catechising, I resolve on taking great pains with this duty. It is, I must remember, much more difficult than preaching. It seems to require much knowledge of Scripture, readiness of application, and tact in eliciting and conveying profitable instruction. Although the Church Catechism will require some time to be efficiently expounded and brought out, I may, at other seasons, introduce the Epistle or Gospel, making it to bear on the Catechism. How appositely, for instance, on the first Sunday after Epiphany, may the Gospel, thus catechetically interpreted, be explained in harmony with the fifth Commandment! The foundation of truth will thus be laid, if I catechise faithfully; and many expressions will be made plain, which are quite unintelligible to the ignorant; and I am keeping, meanwhile, my vow.

It seems clear that I am not, ordinarily, at liberty to baptize an adult, while I am only in Deacon's Orders. The case of an

adult is of a more complex character, and requires more experience and judgment than I can be yet possessed of. The early Church had her body of Catechists. The time of probation was long. The case of Simon is left on record to warn us, perhaps, how the mighty gift of Baptism may be suspended, or rendered worse than fruitless to those who come to the font, at years of discretion, in deceit and in unrighteousness. As so much responsibility rests on the Minister, that he is even required to communicate on this matter with the Bishop, I rejoice in thinking, that, during my first stage of sacred labour, I shall be spared this portion of accountableness.

I am also taught, that it is included in the duties of the Deacon, "to search for "the sick, and the poor, and impotent "people of the Parish; to intimate their "names and places where they dwell unto "the Curate, that by his exhortation they

"may be relieved by the alms of the "Parishioners or otherwise."

Blessed be thy name, O Lord Jesus! who didst care for the poor; didst preach the Gospel to the poor; didst put it into the heart of thine Apostles, in the very first days of the Church, to provide for the poor and needy. Oh! give me a heart willingly and affectionately to search for thy sick, and necessitous, and impotent members, and to provide and carry relief for them. Inspire me with a kind and courteous behaviour to the poor. Put into my heart words of wisdom, and piety, and tenderness for them. And may I observe strict self-denial in husbanding my own means, that I may have the more to offer in thy service, O Lord! who gavest even thine own self for us.

When I thus go forth as the Messenger of Christ, how careful ought I to be in remembering that I am acting in the name of Christ, and (with all reverence be it

felt) in the Person of Christ! How considerate was that Holy One! How gracious and bountiful in His gifts! "God loveth "a cheerful giver [3]." "He that showeth "mercy, with cheerfulness [4]" let him show mercy. Though our divine Master dispensed His compassionate gifts in other form than that of alms, yet, in the readiness with which He went forth to heal the sick, to cleanse the leper, to feed the fainting multitude, may I read my lesson of beneficence and sympathy. Blessed Saviour! Thou wast ever doing good to the body, while seeking and saving the souls of them that were lost. Fill me with thy spirit of loving mercy and tender thoughtfulness for others! "They need "not depart; give ye them to eat [5]." "I "will come and heal him [6]." "Daughter, "thy faith hath made thee whole. Go in "peace [7]." "Son, be of good cheer, thy "sins be forgiven thee [8]." And yet (for every feature in our Lord's character is

[3] 2 Cor. ix. 7.
[4] Rom. xii. 8.
[5] St. Matt. xiv. 16.
[6] St. Matt. viii. 5.
[7] St. Mark v. 34.
[8] St. Matt. ix. 2.

divine) we do perceive an inquiry at times into the mind of those who applied to Him for help. "If thou canst believe, "all things are possible to him that be-"lieveth[9]." "Believe ye that I am able "to do this? According to your faith "be it unto you[1]." Thus must I discriminate, and endeavour to do good as a Christian Minister. While I tender my pledge, gladly and willingly to make myself a servant for Christ's sake to the poor, I have need to inquire, who are the fittest persons for profiting by the boon; lest, while seeking to relieve the body, I increase the disorders of an idle, vicious, or deceitful soul.

PRAYER.

GLORY be to Thee, O most compassionate God and Father, who hast so constituted the Ministry of thy Church as to let the burden fall lightly upon us in our youth and inexperience. Glory be to Thee for calling us sinful beings to an Office to

[9] St. Mark ix. 23. [1] St. Matt. ix. 28.

which thy strength alone can make us equal; and, even then, greatly needing thy forbearance and mercy. Blessed be thy Name, that our call, at first, is "to *assist* "the Priest," until by time and grace we are capable of higher labours. What thanks can we render for being permitted to distribute the Bread of Life and hold out the Cup of Salvation, and to receive the little children into the family of Christ? Grant, O Lord, that a mighty grace may always preserve in me at that solemn hour the deepest reverence and most profound adoration. At the foot of the Cross may I be enabled to look unto Jesus with a good hope that pardon is extended unto me. By the fountain of the Baptismal stream may I recal my own infinite need of renewing and purifying love from thy Holy Spirit, the Comforter! At the Holy Table may I be made one with Christ, and Christ with me! And whensoever I am required to read before thine assembled congregation the oracles of truth, teach my lips to utter the sacred words as the words of God in all thought-

fulness and reverence. When I am permitted to preach thy word, may I ever preach "the truth as it is in Jesus," with all plainness, and earnestness, and affection of spirit; seeking, at thy divine hand, a power to apply the truth to the conscience of my hearers and myself. And, in whatsoever way thy servant be employed, in teaching or exhorting, in relieving need, or soothing sorrow, or alleviating sickness, in all things may I cheerfully and willingly "spend and be spent" to the glory of God! Thus humbly following the example of my blessed Saviour, and resting all my trust in Him alone, may I be an instrument to the edification of thy Church, and the honour of thy holy Name, through the same Jesus Christ our Lord.

MEDITATION X.

"WILL you apply all your diligence to "frame and fashion your own lives and the "lives of your families, according to the

"doctrine of Christ; and to make both "yourselves and them as much as in you "lieth, wholesome examples of the flock "of Christ?"—"I will do so, the Lord "being my helper."

"I have given you an example[2]."

O blessed and holy Saviour! *Thou* mightest thus speak. But who are *we*, that we should take upon ourselves to think of setting an example? When we ponder our duty in following our Saviour as an example, we instinctively flee for safety to the consideration of His Atonement and Resurrection. May I ever recal the words of prayer, taught by the Church. "Almighty and everlasting God, who of "thy tender love towards mankind, hast "sent thy Son our Saviour Jesus Christ to "take upon Him our flesh, and to suffer "death upon the Cross, that all mankind "should follow the example of His great "humility, mercifully grant that we may "both follow the example of His patience,

[2] St. John xiii. 15.

"and also be made partakers of His resur-
"rection; through the same Jesus Christ
"our Lord." Would to God that I thought more frequently of the perfect pattern tracked out by the Holy One, in the wilderness of life! What great need have I to bear in mind His divine mission, His persuasive preaching, His habits of devotion, His endurance of the daily cross, His forbearance as a Teacher, His superiority to the ease and honour of the world, His untiring zeal, His unfailing lowliness and meekness! Though "in Him dwelt all "the fulness of the Godhead bodily," Christ, in His human nature, was tempted like as we are, sin only excepted. So holy was that human nature, that the fire of temptation was extinguished as soon as it came in contact with the pure stream of will in His spirit. Let me think, for my example, of Jesus, the Man in whose flesh God was manifested, one Christ.

I know my backwardness and dulness in prayer. Let me pause and meditate on

the *devotional* habits of Christ. I behold Him in prayer at His Baptism. Before He chooses the twelve Apostles, He continues *all night* in prayer. Standing by the grave of Lazarus, He prays. At His Transfiguration, He prays. How intensely does He pray in the garden of Gethsemane! How calmly, deeply, and tenderly on the Cross! Sometimes we read of our Lord "rising up a great while before day" for prayer. Again we find Him, after some great miracle, withdrawing into a secret place for prayer, sometimes in the garden, sometimes on the mountain. He knew that the Father did always hear Him. Lord Jesus! make me to love this blessed communion with the Father, through Thee. I am a poor wandering creature in prayer. At times, alas! I feel even unwillingness to pray; and, at times, am puffed up with thoughts of myself, when I have, but like a beggar, told my needs unto Thee. But do Thou give unto me the spirit of prayer! Lord! teach me to pray as Thou didst teach thy disciples!

The holy Jesus, again, is an example of *self-denial*. And, in an age of self-indulgence, I must not be afraid of conforming to the directions and intimations in the Bible, for "keeping my body under, "and bringing it into subjection [3];" nor may I disregard the authority of the Church in her appointed rules. Did not our blessed Lord, who was incapable of sin, fast forty days and forty nights? Hath not He enjoined that when the Bridegroom was taken away, then should we fast? Do I not perceive the Apostles joining fasting with prayer, and the early Christians doing the same? And how can I presume to set myself above a practice which the first followers of the Lord observed, and which the Lord of all, Himself, thought fit to mind? I do believe that if I look to God for His grace herein, I shall better be enabled to keep down the animal part of my nature in subserviency to the spiritual; to rise to higher frames of devotion; to impose a yoke on rebel passions, and to become assimilated, in some measure, to

[3] 1 Cor. ix. 27.

the beings of a higher order. I shall attain to habits of greater simplicity, and be more like the messenger of heaven, the steward, the watchman, the man of God. Like Daniel, my mind will be prepared by grace for deeper insight into heavenly things, and clearer and fuller views of divine Revelation. Master! I desire to follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest.

I would also contemplate our Lord's example as that of perfect *zeal* and untiring labour. He "went about doing good[4]." Attended by His chosen few, wherever He moved, the bright influence of this holy family was shed around. In the course of His blessed exertions, I behold Him hungering at one time, thirsty at another, snatching a few moments' rest in crossing the lake, preaching incessantly, journeying on foot, ready to come forth at a fresh summons, after the labour of the day seemed ended. What calmness and evenness are manifested by the Lord Jesus in

[4] Acts x. 38.

all His divine course while doing such a work, in a few short years, as the Redemption of the world! May the good Lord make me ever to turn unto the Sun of Righteousness in His heavenly course! And may He create and preserve in me unabated zeal, tempered by a stedfast, unhurried *sobriety* of mind! In an age of excitement, may I rule myself and mine in a devoted but quiet spirit! May my zeal be found burning with steady warmth, never bursting into irregular and ill-directed flames of passion and extravagance!

Blessed be our gracious Lord also for the pattern of *meekness* which He has set us. Lord! how didst Thou endure the malice, the cunning, the insolence daily exerted against Thee! How forbearing in thine answers, how gentle in thy spirit! How by long-suffering didst Thou disarm thine enemies! Oh, may I strive when tried, to avoid uttering hasty words, irritating remarks, or giving way to a fretful or revengeful temper! May I think of Him,

of whom the very officers of justice, returning without their prisoner, declared, "Never man spake like this man[5]." My trials can never be such bitter trials as those submitted to by our Lord. I, no doubt, shall be opposed in carrying out useful plans; I shall be reviled, suspected, misunderstood, perhaps insulted to my face. But may the remembrance of my dear Lord's meekness and gentleness be ever present to my mind! May I look not to His example only, but to His grace, descending from the Head to the meanest member of His spiritual body, and resolve to overcome evil with good, and to rule my tongue, my temper, and behaviour in all meekness!

"Having loved His own which were "in the world, He loved them unto the "end[6]." I will strive after, and pray for, an *affectionate* spirit towards my people. While avoiding profession, and unguarded

[5] St. John vii. 46. [6] St. John xiii. 1.

words, mere words of overstrained feeling, I will really and truly endeavour after a *Pastor's loving spirit.* Let not my language in conversation or in my preaching be interwoven with soft or fulsome terms, while a dry, hard, repulsive manner and look seem to contradict the reality. Do I not observe our blessed Master readily listening to the tale of distress, the cry of necessity, the prayer of faith? And how shall not my spirit go forth and enter into the hearts and troubles of others, with all the help of genuine sympathy and kindling interest? "Jesus wept[7]." "Jesus was "moved with compassion[8]." "Jesus sighed "deeply in His spirit[9]." "Jesus groaned "within Himself[1]." Jesus forgat Himself in the coming trials of Jerusalem, and "beheld the city, and wept over it[2]." And His merciful soul was moved at the consideration of those who should be with child and giving suck. "Daughters of "Jerusalem, weep not for me; but weep

[7] St. John xi. 35.
[8] St. Matt. xiii. 14.
[9] St. Mark viii. 12.
[1] St. John xi. 38.
[2] St. Luke xix. 41.

"for yourselves, and for your children [3]." May the remembrance of my Lord be ever fresh in my mind, and cure me of my natural selfishness and indifference for the sorrows of those around me. I will not be above giving time patiently to hear what the poor and afflicted have to say. Would not our Saviour have listened to them? And shall I imagine that I have other matters of more importance calling for my time, and abruptly refuse to hearken? I feel assured that my Ministry will never be blessed, until I have attained to some degree of Christ-like sympathy. Whatever other gifts may be mine, they will be useless, until I have learned, as the Lord Jesus in His holy pattern taught me, to "rejoice with them that do re-"joice, and to weep with them that "weep [4]."

Nor let me ever forget that Jesus was *lowly* of heart. He was "in the form of

[3] St. Luke xxiii. 28. [4] Rom. xii. 15.

"God, and thought it not robbery to be "equal with God, yet took on Him the "form of a servant, and was made in the "likeness of man[5]." When I am tempted to pride of heart, conceit, or self-importance, as if I were "some great one," let my mind revert to the lowly and unprovided birth of my Saviour,—His poverty, His circumcision, His submission to Joseph and the blessed Virgin, His waiting upon St. John's Baptism, His tenderness to little children, His graciousness of manner to the Apostles and others, and "learn of "Him."

PRAYER.

O MOST holy and compassionate Saviour Jesus! our example, our strength, our salvation, teach me to be ever looking unto Thee as "the Author and Finisher of my "faith." Endue me with that *meekness* and *lowliness*, that *kindness* and *tenderness of spirit*, that *zeal*, and *patience*, and *self-denial* in the service of God, that I may,

[5] Phil. ii. 6, 7.

in my poor degree, and according to the measure of the Spirit, reflect the graces of Thee, the Head of the Christian body. Let thy goodness be so communicated unto me, as thy messenger of mercy, that while the light of my example shineth forth from Thee, the Sun of Righteousness, the entire glory may be ascribed where alone it is due. Let me never be weary in the great and blessed work of caring for souls, and seeking to save them. Enable me to apply all my diligence to frame and fashion my life according to thy doctrine, and to lead those around me to be helpers in bringing others unto Thee, the great Shepherd of the flock. O Lord! Thou art in heaven, and I upon earth. What can I work, unless Thou first work within me, of thy grace? Hear me, O Lord! supply all my needs, and grant that in the great day I may rejoice to see that in thy might and mercy I have not run in vain, or laboured in vain. Even so, blessed Jesus! *Amen.*

MEDITATION XI.

"WILL you reverently obey your Ordinary,
"and other chief Ministers of the Church,
"and them to whom the charge and go-
"vernment over you is committed, follow-
"ing with a glad mind and will their godly
"admonitions?"—"I will endeavour my-
"self, the Lord being my helper."

Whenever, O my soul, there is found in me an unwillingness to submit to just authority, there is reason to fear that I am yet a slave to pride. Soon may the day come, when in our Church there is stricter rule, more godly discipline, and readier obedience! It is of great importance to us to study the Service for Consecration of Bishops, that we may see the heavy burden lying on our spiritual Fathers, and, by dutifully submitting ourselves, lighten their responsibility. To the Bishop it is said, in words not to be forgotten by any,

"Will you correct and punish, within "your Diocese, such as be unquiet, dis- "obedient, and criminous, according to "such authority as you have by God's "Word, and as to you shall be committed "by the Ordinance of this Realm?" From the period of the great Rebellion, our branch of the Church seems never to have recovered her just measure of spiritual authority. And when, indeed, it was in her power to have insisted on the high privileges of her position—with a generous, but misplaced confidence, she trusted to those in power, who overlooked their sacred duty, and forgat her.

But, instead of reproaching the State with its indifference to her claims, it is our safer course, as members of the Church, and that of her Ministers in particular, to feel assured, that chastisement has come, with God's permission, for our disregard of His mercies shown in raising her up out of the dust, and for the worldliness and deadness to spiritual things which palsied her during the last century. "Lord "God Almighty, true and righteous are

"thy judgments[6]." "It is good for us "that we have been afflicted[7]."

May the Giver of all grace cause our trial to work for our good, in humbling our pride, arousing us from our lukewarmness, enabling us to cast away our secularity, dissensions, envyings, and suspicions!

While I mourn over what is lacking within the walls of our Zion, let me pray that what remains may be strengthened, and that what is needful may be vouchsafed us, and that our dross may be purely purged away, and may no more of her sons be enticed away to other communions, in a morbid, restless, or fearful spirit; but join hand to hand, and courageously and charitably labour to raise our Church to a higher position of usefulness on earth. Let me faithfully confess my own share also in the guilt which lieth against us! May I not add to my own offences, in sinning against her doctrine through igno-

[6] Rev. xvi. 7. [7] Ps. cxix. 71.

rance, and her discipline through pride, and by unworthy ministration of the Sacraments, grow in unbelief and hardness of heart!

If I endeavour, according to the plain commands of the Church, to carry out the spirit of her sacred rules in my own restricted circle of Ministerial duty which may be assigned me, and swerve not from these to indulge a private judgment, at least I shall deliver my own soul. This is a safer course than to take upon myself to laud our branch of the Church, as if no imperfection adhered to her in an earthly contact, and yet to take a low standard, and be self-satisfied.

It may, indeed, please God to visit our Church yet more severely; it may be His will to remove her candlestick altogether out of its place: and this would be no more than what we have deserved. But God is merciful. And when I consider the new life which has been imparted, the missionary Bishops which go forth from year to year, the many sanctuaries risen, and rising, through the length and breadth

of the land, the efforts made for the better training of her Ministers, the zeal shown for education on religious principles, and the sounder views of Evangelical truth and Apostolic order spreading, I, for one, will not be afraid. I will trust in the Lord, and be doing what good I can. I will tarry the Lord's leisure, and pray for the coming of Christ's kingdom. "Oh, that "the salvation of Israel were come out of "Zion! When God bringeth back the cap- "tivity of His people, Jacob shall rejoice, "and Israel shall be glad[8]."

One part of our discipline, as this vow teaches, at least, is in my own power. I am resolved to submit to those who are in righteous authority over me. I will in no case resist the godly requirement of my ecclesiastical superiors. I may differ from them in the view they take of matters; but I will not oppose or defy them in their lawful plans for the government and

[8] Ps. liii. 7, 8.

guidance of the Church. If, in earthly societies, no peace or stability can be secured where due subordination is not observed, can it be of less consequence in the constitution and ruling of the Church? Do I not read that there are Archangels as well as Angels in the host above? and that one star differeth from another in glory? I will meditate, with holy Hooker, on the number and nature of Angels, and their blessed obedience and order, without which peace could not be in heaven; and oh, that it might be so on earth!

"I came down from heaven, not to do "mine own will, but the will of Him that "sent Me[9]." When a rebellious spirit tempts me at any time to offer opposition to my superiors in the Church, let me recal the perfect pattern of Him who "pleased not Himself," but was meek and lowly of heart! I will remember how readily St. Paul, on coming to Jerusalem, yielded to the suggestion of St. James;

[9] St. John vi. 38.

and, in so doing, to the eye of the unthinking, might almost have seemed acting in contradiction to the opinions expressed in his Epistles; and yet all this was done in genuine humility. We cannot commonly charge our Fathers in the Church with tyrannical proceedings against us. We may regret that the vastness of their Dioceses forbids *that* more frequent intercourse between the chief and the inferior pastors which would be so desirable. But we must allow that their rule is, for the most part, not severe; and their demeanour not often otherwise than kind and gracious. Suppose we think a Bishop chargeable with an error of judgment, when insisting on some particular observance in his Diocese. It must be remembered, that, as all the responsibility lies with the head, it is not only our safety, but our duty to comply with his desires, rather than follow the leading of our own mind, when he is not opposing the Law and the Canons. Never are we more secure than when we are walking in the path of submission.

The motive and the spirit by which obedience to any command is accompanied is of the greatest consequence. Our Church is peremptory in her directions in this respect. She requires us not only to submit to the wishes and injunctions of our superiors, but even so to do "with a glad mind "and will." It is not the forced and sullen compliance of the slave, but the ready, unflinching acquiescence of the true child of God that I must show. Thou, O Lord! seest into the recesses of our hearts. Thou wilt *give* unto us both the self-denial, and also the consequent willingness which are required, if we duly seek thy grace in this and all other ways. The holy Psalmist declared that he would *run* the way of God's Commandments when his heart was set at liberty. And He that heareth the prayer will assuredly, in this and all other things, though at first they may be trying to a fallen nature, bestow on us the power both to will and to do.

PRAYER.

O LORD GOD, who hast constituted the heavens above and the earth beneath, in a wonderful manner, and hast appointed divers orders of Angels and Archangels, Cherubim and Seraphim, each in his own rank, to do Thee service, make me humble and obedient in the situation wherein thy divine providence shall see fit to place me. O Lord! I know that there is no power but of Thee. And if I dare resist those who are put over me by thy governance, I am verily guilty of resisting not man but God[1]. Implant in me such true lowliness, that I may not be hasty in questioning the wisdom of those commands which are enjoined by my superiors in thy Church. If they be godly admonitions,—then, whether they cross my desires or disappoint my hopes, do Thou enable me, "with a glad mind and will," to recognize thine almighty power and authority, and

[1] Rom. xiii. 2.

to bow my heart thereto. And since the flesh is rebellious, and much inclined to murmur, do Thou, O Lord! restrain the risings of a reluctant heart. Glory be to Thee for the assurance of a grace from on high more than equal to our needs. And in His strength, who was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin, make me more than conqueror in this and all my spiritual conflicts, through the same Jesus Christ our Lord.

MEDITATION XII.

"THEN the Bishop laying his Hands severally upon the Head of every one of them, humbly kneeling before him, shall say, 'Take thou Authority to execute 'the Office of a Deacon in the Church 'of God committed unto thee; In the 'Name of the Father, and of the Son, 'and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.'"

"Then shall the Bishop deliver to every one of them the New Testament, saying,

"'Take thou Authority to read the Gospel
"'in the Church of God, and to preach
"'the same, if thou be thereto licensed
"'by the Bishop himself.'"

It will be an awful moment when the Bishop lays his hands upon my head, as I kneel before God, to receive my commission on earth from him who is acting in the name of our ascended Lord. It will be an hour of the greatest moment to my own soul when the Bishop pronounces over me, "Take thou Authority to exe-
"cute the Office of a Deacon in the
"Church of God, committed unto thee;
"In the Name of the Father, and of the
"Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen."
Can I be sufficiently prostrate in mind, when receiving such a commission from Heaven, ministered unto me by one to whom authority to do so has been, according to the divine rule, delegated? While our Church does not define Holy Orders a Sacrament, in her Ritual she surrounds the sacred service with all possible solemnity, and demands from us the deepest

reverence of soul and body. In my heart I believe that the authority to act, in such a cause as that of the salvation of souls, can only come from Him who sitteth at the right hand of the Father. Most truly do I desire to recognize the divine Presence of the Lord Jesus Himself in the midst of the congregation. To Him do I look up as having called me to this high honour. From Him do I hope soon to receive my most sacred commission. But what a trust! Is it not enough to be accountable for one's own soul? Am I really thenceforth to be answerable for the souls of others by an actual commission from the Lord in heaven? What could induce me to undertake such a trust, but the belief that Christ Himself is present, and is empowering me? What could sustain me in such a work, but the assurance that Christ Himself will uphold me? I feel the desire of being a helper to others. God has, I hope, put this feeling within me. And now that, in the plain path of His providence, I behold the tokens of His encouragement to come for-

ward and receive my authority from Him, I will not be afraid. He will grant me the needful supply of strength and guidance.

I do indeed trust and pray that I may not have hastily or unadvisedly presented myself thus far. I have searched, and still desire to search, my heart. I do not think that a desire for ease, or wealth, or display, or rising in the world, is my motive. But, before God, my purpose, as far as I can judge, is, to bring back souls which have strayed from the fold, to Christ; to stablish those who have kept nigher unto their Saviour; to comfort and encourage; and ever faithfully to rebuke and reprove where warning is needed. God knoweth how I have cried unto Him to keep me back, even at the last moment, if He sees any thing about me likely to dishonour His holy Ministry. And, O Lord! short as the time now is, I do implore of Thee to enable me, by a spirit of fervent prayer, and godly discipline, and

thoughtful retirement, to brace myself for the work, more and more, in all humility and faith. When my heart sinks within me, I will remember thy word unto Moses, "Certainly I will be with thee[2]." This word shall be my stay when amid weakness and imperfect knowledge I am preaching thy Gospel; or still more solemnly engaged in ministering in the Holy Sacraments; or training the young; or visiting from house to house, in order to strengthen, or arouse, or console the people to whom Thou sendest me. Never may I for one instant forget that I am thy servant, thy Minister of grace; and that it is only thy secret help which can make my words and service effectual in the covenant of mercy. Were it not for this all-powerful arm of love, I should sink under the remembrance of my past errors and present infirmities. But I will, with the ear of faith, hear the Lord saying unto me, as unto the Prophet Jeremiah, "Say not, I "am a child: for thou shalt go to all that

[2] Exod. iii. 12.

"I shall send thee, and whatsoever I com-
"mand thee thou shalt speak. Be not
"afraid of their faces: for I am with thee
"to deliver thee, saith the Lord[3]." I will think of the living coal from the altar with which Isaiah's lips were touched by the Seraph, and strive to bring home to my heart a sure promise of mercy. "Lo, this
"hath touched thy lips, and thine iniquity
"is taken away, and thy sin purged[4]." Lord God! enable me hereafter often to look back to that moment, now so near, when kneeling before Christ, I shall receive from Him my most sacred Commission through the hands of His ministering servant. Teach me to perceive in that act my clear call from heaven to go forth as the appointed ambassador of my heavenly King. May my heart respond to the voice of the Church, attesting, through so many generations, an authority coming at first from thy dear Son, and guarded by her care! It is but as yesterday, in thy sight, when to the Apostles the Lord

[3] Jer. i. 6, 7. [4] Isa. vi 7.

pronounced, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost [5]." "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the "end of the world [6]." It is but as yesterday when the Holy Ghost audibly announced, "Separate me Barnabas and Saul "for the work whereunto I have called "them [7]." That work is the same; even "the grace of God which bringeth salva-"tion [8]." That Presence is the same. "Where two or three are gathered toge-"ther in my name, there am I in the "midst of them [9]." The difference is only in the several earthen vessels employed by God Himself. In that solemn moment, now, I trust, at hand, give me, O Lord! the deepest sense of my own unworthiness to be admitted into such a calling as was once exercised by the Son of God Himself on earth in perfectness. Give me the heartiest dedication of myself to thy service in spirit, soul, and body. Suffer me neither to be elated by the greatness of the honour, nor oppressed by the weight

[5] St. John xx. 22.
[6] St. Matt. xxviii. 20.
[7] Acts xiii. 2.
[8] Tit. ii. 11.
[9] St. Matt. xviii. 20.

of responsibility. With these and such other gifts as Thou shalt make me capable of employing, may I calmly and devotedly give up myself unto Thee, and gladly put on me the robe of the Ministry, and reverentially enter upon the services of the sanctuary.

"Take thou authority." For ever far from me, as an abomination, be the thought, that I am entering into a mere *profession!* If such low and secular imaginations be allowed within me, I shall probably begin the work in a mean, worldly spirit. Little will be attempted by me. *That* little will have more regard to self than to the glory of God. Plans of expediency, or indolence, or self-advancement, will be found debasing my spirit; poor and paltry desires will take hold of me; external things will usurp the place of inward realities; and, instead of the glory of the Lord appearing around me, some wretched vision of earthly character will flit before my mind. When I actually hear those blessed words said to

me, even to *me*, who am not worthy of the least of God's mercies—"Take *thou* autho-"rity"—those words longed for almost from childhood, well may my heart beat with joy, though in some fear and trembling. Well may my heart take up that outbreak of gratitude, and apply it to myself—"I thank Christ Jesus, our Lord, "for that He hath counted me faithful, "putting me into the Ministry[1]." "I "will go in the strength of the Lord God. "I will make mention of thy righteous-"ness, even of thine only[2]." My soul shall feed on the promised grace accompanying Holy Orders. If the Commission were granted to me in my own strength, it would be a terrific dispensation. My extreme weakness before God, and the innumerable perils to be encountered in such a warfare, would be sufficient to discourage me, if I did not feel that the cause is that of the Lord God, and that His almighty comfort and help are unfailingly promised to His servants.

[1] 1 Tim. i. 12. [2] Ps. lxxi. 14.

Believing in the sacred Commission, I will not doubt the grace accompanying Ordination. I will not think lightly of it. I will not, with God's blessing, profane it. I know and am persuaded, that, to them that seek, it will be given. And to this tower of strength may I flee continually in my need! Is not the NAME of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, called over me and upon me? "The Lord is my light and my salvation; "whom then shall I fear? The Lord is the "strength of my life; of whom then shall "I be afraid[3]?" "One thing have I de- "sired. That will I require; even that I "may dwell in the house of the Lord all "the days of my life, to behold the beauty "of the Lord, and to inquire in His tem- "ple[4]." With what calm joy may I *then* receive the token of my admission, the NEW TESTAMENT! May I ever read it with reverence, for it is God's Word; and, when I am admitted by the Bishop, may I "preach the truth as it is in Jesus."

[3] Ps. xxvii. 1. [4] Ps. xxvii. 4.

Let me duly be reminded hereby of my taking the *first* step in the Ministry, and so cautiously and zealously labour in the Lord's vineyard as to purchase, under grace, the higher degree, and, both now and then, "adorn the doctrine of God my "Saviour."

PRAYER.

MOST GRACIOUS GOD, who of thy divine providence hast appointed divers Orders in thy Church, vouchsafe thy blessing to thine unworthy servant now seeking the Office of a Deacon in Christ's Church. Let thy fatherly hand rest upon me, enabling me to receive my sacred Commission with all humility, but with a lively faith in the presence and power of thy dear Son. Gracious Father, grant me the fulness of reconciliation with Thee through thy Son. Blessed Jesus! O Thou, who knowest the perils by which we are encompassed, pity, pardon, and accept thy servant, who is longing to labour for thy Church; and, O Holy Comforter! speak

peace to my fainting soul. Impart unto me all needful help and inward might for the furtherance of the Gospel. "Holy, Holy, "Holy, Lord God of Hosts. Heaven and "earth are full of thy glory. Glory be to "Thee, O Lord God."

MEDITATION XIII.

BLESSED be God, who hath in so many portions of His Holy Word set before us the duties of the sacred Ministry. And in the Gospel for this service, St. Luke xii. 35, how forcibly uttered is the requirement of *watchfulness!* "Let your loins be girded "about, and your lights burning; and ye "yourselves like unto men that wait for "their Lord, when He will return from the "wedding; that when He cometh and "knocketh, they may open unto Him im- "mediately. Blessed are those servants, "whom the Lord when He cometh shall "find watching: verily I say unto you, "that He shall gird Himself, and make "them to sit down to meat, and will come

"forth and serve them. And if He shall "come in the second watch, or come in "the third watch, and find them so, blessed "are those servants." "Let your loins be "girded about." May I keep myself unimpeded by the cares, pleasures, and ambitious desires of this perishing life! Let not even those portions of my daily calling which are necessary, become a hindrance unto me in the path of Christian fidelity and ministerial zeal! Why do I not live as if I verily believed that the "same "Jesus, which is taken up from us into "heaven, shall so come in like manner "as He was seen to go into heaven[5]?" Are we not taught that the coming of the Lord draweth nigh; that it will be sudden, and unexpected at the last? It is an awful thought, that Christ may come before another year has passed away. And are not His Ministers pledged to "prepare "the way of the Lord," that at His second coming, Christians may be found an acceptable people in His sight? What shall become of me, if I am found immersed in

[5] Acts i. 11.

worldly thoughts, or mere literary labours, or chiefly in the study of sciences and arts, to the neglect of the "one thing "needful?"

"And your lights burning." In the parable of the ten virgins, it is seen how they *all* slumbered and slept, and how some of the lamps had gone out. May my service be that of a devoted follower, keeping the light shining by a pure example, and showing to others, as taught myself by God, "the way, the truth, and the life." Especially in a simple and stedfast course may I ever seek after the means of grace, and inculcate their importance on others! "And ye yourselves like unto servants that "wait for their Lord, when He will return "from the wedding; that when He cometh "and knocketh, they may open unto Him "immediately." It is want, or weakness, of faith, which darkens the great truth of the second coming of Christ. If we believed it in our hearts, would there not be within us a deeper interest in the progress of Christ's kingdom, greater zeal for His

glory, and livelier watchfulness for His Church? Like the hour of death, *that* Advent can only once be manifested in the days to come. Woe, woe unto me, if I be not in such a contrite, believing, loving, pure frame of mind, as to welcome my Master, crying, "Blessed be He that cometh "in the Name of the Lord."

How gracious are His words of promise! "Blessed are those servants, whom the "Lord when He cometh shall find so "watching: verily I say unto you, that "He shall gird Himself, and make them "to sit down to meat, and will come forth "and serve them." Thus, with infinite condescension, speaks the Son of God. Such are His astounding promises to them that are in their right place amongst His people, overlooking His household, caring for the wants of His flock, and doing all in reverential love and zeal for their heavenly Master in His probationary absence. He will not be "extreme to mark what "was done amiss." He will not, in the

overflowing of mercy, impute to them their shortcomings in His work; but He will accept their imperfect services for His Name's sake, and with wonderful compassion will Himself minister to their perfect rest, and peace, and glory. "And if He "shall come in the second watch, or come "in the third watch, and shall find them "so, blessed are those servants." By some among the early Christians a speedy Advent was looked for. In the middle ages the day of the Lord was thought to have almost arrived. But these words are still unfulfilled. How much longer the day of grace may be we cannot tell.

"Seu vigilo intentus studiis, seu dormio, semper
Judicis extremi nostras tuba personet aures."

May it be imprinted on my mind, that I must be the Minister of Christ at all times, and in all places. The spirit of the Christian Ministry must burn within me, wheresoever I may be. I must be earnest, devoted, intent, watching. "Were "our souls as pure as Cherubs, as zealous "and active as the blessed spirits that are

"above, we should yet have reason to "cover our faces, and to be swallowed up "in a deep sense of our own insufficiency "for these things[6]."

How awful would it be for a Minister of Christ to be summoned into eternity from the festive board, the chase, the dance, or some sport or public spectacle! Who would not rather desire to be called at the Altar, or offering the prayers of the Church, preaching the Gospel, or teaching the young and ignorant, or soothing the mind of the sick, the sorrowful, and the dying? True, that a weak creature like myself needs repose and change. The sun itself withdraws its beams, and calm night succeeds busy day. And our constitution is such as to be most efficient by alternate seasons of activity and relaxation. But our heart must be with our heavenly Master. "The Ministry is a work worthy our zeal "and our love. And no greater testimony "of this can we give than by a faithful "discharge of the duties of our calling. "If our work be great, our reward will be

[6] Scougal.

"infinitely greater; and we have Omni-
"potence engaged in our assistance." "Up
"and be doing, and the Lord will be with
"us. Only be we careful to maintain such
"a deep and constant sense of the engage-
"ments under which we lie, as may awaken
"us unto the greatest diligence and watch-
"fulness both over ourselves and others[7]."

"Then shall the Bishop proceed in the
"Communion, and all that are ordered
"shall tarry, and receive the Holy Com-
"munion the same day with the Bishop."

From the Acts of the Apostles we learn how constantly and joyfully the Christians partook of the Holy Eucharist. Much have we lost of this unearthly love and desire for this divine fellowship with the Saviour. Slow and heavy are we in joining ourselves anew unto the Lord in these reviving mysteries. But on no occasion can we more need the heavenly gifts of the new Life (so far above any thing we can conceive) which are imparted in this feast of grace,

[7] Scougal.

than when young, and weak, and ignorant, we are going forth against such enemies as those encamped against the Lord's Church. Herein, if we come in faith and lowliness of heart, we are assured of His working in us and with us, in His own everlasting cause. Now, if ever, does the burden of sin appear intolerable, and the remembrance of our past sins grievous to the soul. But through what difficulties shall not the thought of being one with Christ, and Christ with me, bear me triumphantly! "Because He lives, I shall live "also[8]." The Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world, will have mercy on me. The Holy One that sitteth at the right hand of the Father will hear my prayer, and will have mercy upon me.

PRAYER.

ALMIGHTY GOD, Giver of all good things, who of thy great goodness dost vouchsafe at this time, as I would humbly hope, to

[8] St. John xiv. 19.

accept and take me thy servant unto the Office of a Deacon in thy Church, make me, I beseech Thee, O Lord, modest, humble, and constant in my Ministration, to have a ready will to observe all spiritual discipline; that I, having always the testimony of a good conscience, and continuing ever stable and strong in thy Son Christ, may so well behave myself in this inferior Office, that I may be found worthy to be called unto the higher Ministries in thy Church, through the same thy Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ, to whom be glory and honour, world without end. *Amen.*

Glory be to the good God, who deigneth to accept the offer of such unworthy services as I have to present. Lord, Thou didst not entrust the Ministry of souls even to Angels, but hast constituted sinful man to be an instrument in thy hands for bringing his brethren unto Thee in Christ. I marvel at the greatness of the mystery, and the graciousness of thy purpose. But I see how it all redounds to thy glory when sinners are converted, and faithful ones built up, and the dark mind en-

lightened, and the weak-hearted made strong. For then, the power of the Holy Ghost is shown forth, and the Hand of the Lord is made bare in the midst of man's weakness. O Lord, magnify thy great Name in my unworthy Ministrations. Grant unto me fervour and reverence in offering the prayers of the congregation; faith and humiliation in celebrating thy Holy Sacraments; zeal, and love, and wisdom in preaching thy Word; faithfulness in admonishing; tenderness in exhorting; bowels of mercies in comforting the poor and afflicted. Set before me the speedy coming of the Judge, that I may not be unmindful of the value of time, but be studious, and devout, and self-denying; and the more my difficulties thicken, the more may my courage increase. And finally, though the salvation of my own single soul be a work of infinite magnitude, and needing all my care, may I be blessed in beholding at the great day some one, at least, to whom thy Word hath not been spoken by my mouth in vain; and that we may, as the redeemed,

rejoice together for ever in Christ Jesus. *Amen.*

Prevent us, O Lord, in all our doings with thy most gracious favour, and further us with thy continual help, that in all our works begun, continued, and ended in Thee, we may glorify thy Holy Name, and finally by thy mercy obtain everlasting life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep our hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, be amongst us and remain with us always. *Amen.*

THE END.

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